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1977 WHO'S WHO IN PRO FOOTBALL

COMPLETE RECORDS
RUNDOWNS • PHOTOS

RATING THE N.B.A. CENTERS

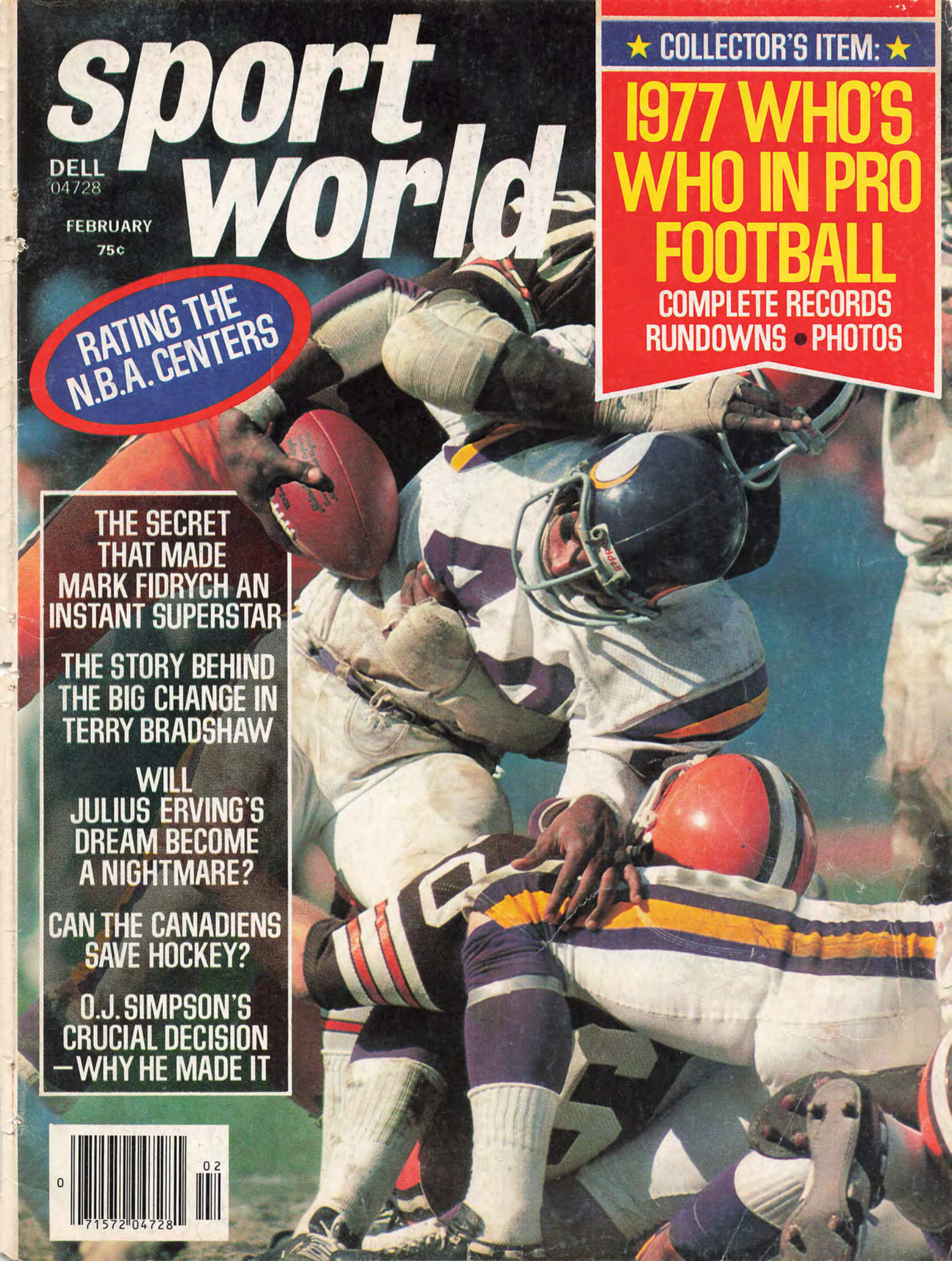
THE SECRET THAT MADE MARK FIDRYCH AN INSTANT SUPERSTAR

THE STORY BEHIND THE BIG CHANGE IN TERRY BRADSHAW

WILL JULIUS ERVING'S DREAM BECOME A NIGHTMARE?

CAN THE CANADIENS SAVE HOCKEY?

O.J. SIMPSON'S CRUCIAL DECISION —WHY HE MADE IT



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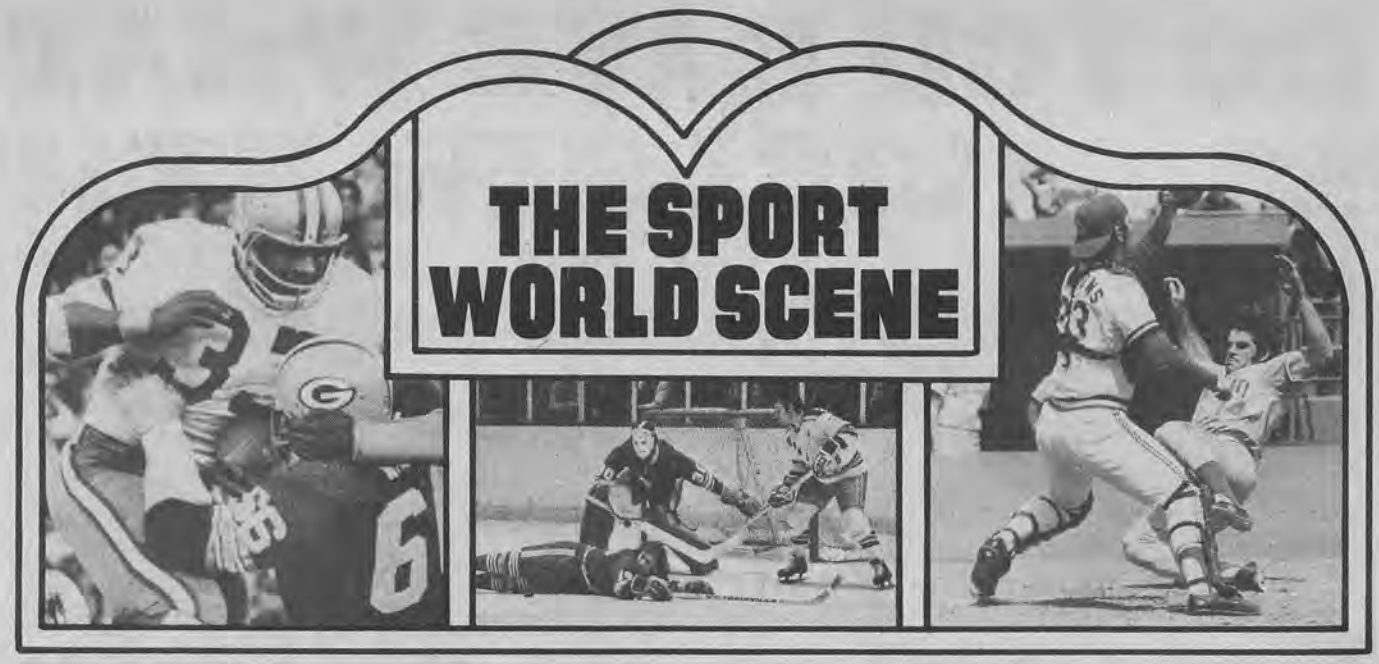

Stats you'll never find in an N.C.A.A., record book. Down in Dallas they'll tell you the number 3,258 has nothing to do with yards gained or points scored. It represents the pre-game fan arrests which have marked (or marred) the grid wars between Oklahoma and Texas. This year Sooner coach Barry Switzer and long horn mentor Darrell Royal had their own private vendetta with charges and counter chargers about spying barreling through the southwest like an old-time dust storm. So militant became their backers that Dallas police reported 119 arrests on the Friday night before the Cotton Bowl extravaganza. Lawmen were forced to use water hoses to cool down 20,000 alcohol-fortified fans who roamed the streets in search of rival heads to break.

Still the pre-game hijinx failed to match the record set in 1967 when nearly 1,000 arrests were made. Nor were their anywhere near the number of broken jaws and dislocated shoulders. Policemen who worked the holding tanks in the 1967 encounter recall having to assign cells according to school to keep the jail house from being demolished.

Next year's battle may have begun already as it was noted that both Switzer and Royal avoided each other and the traditional congratulatory handshake between coaches following the 6-6 tie of the 1976 contest.

***

Training camp lament. Bill Fitch, coach of the N.B.A., Cavaliers, has this comment about rookie prospects: "Not all of them are able to grasp everything we throw at them, including the basketballs."

***

The changing scene. With the Yankees engaged in their first post season series in 12 years, it was only natural for attention to turn to Tonawanda, New York where the 89-year-old Joe McCarthy resides. McCarthy will long be remembered as the manager of the Yankee teams which ruled baseball during the Thirties. Answering the question in most people's mind's, Marse Joe commented:

"The difference between the 1976 Yankees and the old ones is that they seem to have more speed now. They run more. Maybe they have to run more. I can't make any comparisons, though. Once I had five championship teams with five different first basemen. It's like when I was managing the Boston Red Sox in later years, and people would ask me who was the better player, Joe DiMaggio or Ted Williams. How could I answer that?"

With a twinkle in his eyes, McCarthy argues that change does not necessarily represent progresss. "The designated hitter? I don't know, but I like to see the pitcher come to bat. If they get the designated runner on top of the designated hitter, they can do without the manager. The batboy could manage the club then. Who wouldn've been the designated hitter on my clubs in the Thirties? They were all designated hitters in those days." he says.

***

International relations. Bobby Hull, the 37-year-old star of the Winnipeg Jets has become something of an ambassdaor of good will. The elder statesman of Team Canada, Hull has gone out of his way to learn Swedish and Czechoslovakian, an effort which has won him great respect and popularity overseas.

For his part, Hull says, "The Jets have a close working agreement with the Czechs. They're a very friendly, genuine people and really enthusiastic about the game of hockey and Canadian-European relationships. I think we can gain a great deal from them. A happy integration of Canadian and European hockey would be great for the game."

***

Kid stuff. Offensive lineman Bill Ellenbogen may have set some kind of a mark for desire. After the Giants became the fourth N.F.L., team to cut him, Bill commented, "It's the Peter Pan complex. It's a desire not to grow up. It's like living in a never-never land, playing the same game at 31 or 32 you were playing when you were eight years-old."

***

Way to a long life. According to actuaries of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, the best way of insuring your becoming a senior citizen is to be a major league baseball player. Metropolitan statistics show that major league baseball players live longer than the average man and that third basemen live longer than shortstops. The mortality ratio for all players is only 71 per cent as high as that of the general white male population. (Black ballplayers were not included in the study since they have not been in organized baseball a sufficient amount of time.)

The rate for third basemen is only 55 per center, for shortstops it is 67, for pitchers and first baseman 79.

The stress factor takes a heavy toll of managers who have a 92 per cent ratio.

***

Shorn Bulldog. Vincent Dooley, Georgia football coach, has promised that if his Bulldogs win the Southeastern Conference title, he'll shave his entire body. To say his wife isn't happy about the prospect is to put it mildly. Says Mrs. Dooley, "He'd have to do it right in the winter season when he'd need that hair. No, I'm not going to tell him not to do it. He'd be sure to do it then. What can I do? This is awful."

***

Victim of great expectations. That's the way Jeanne Evert, younger sister of tennis champ Chris Evert, sees herself. Jeanne has given up hopes she will surpass her sister on the courts and is concentrating on having fun while still competing.

Says Jeanne, "I guess people expect me to be something I'm not. They feel I let them down. They said I was going to be a great tennis player. At least, No. 2.

"They say, 'Why haven't you done any better?' Now, what do I tell them? I'm sorry I let you down?

"Sometimes my father says it. He tells me that he's sorry that I haven't done any better. He tells me that I have to have a goal. You see, my father doesn't believe in doing things half-way. Neither does Chris. When I tell him that my goal is to be hap-

(Continued on page 80)

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You MUST Win At Least $7,500 With My 13 Points...Or They're Yours Free!

Jacinto Vasquez, Ron Turcotte and Frank Wright call me "a top Racing Analyst" – Now, I'll share The Secrets Guaranteed to make YOU a winner.

Yes! Here is the most powerful Guarantee ever offered to racing fans. You MUST win at least $7500 when you follow my step-by-step, proven "Winning System" – or it's yours free!

Think about this.

What would it be worth to you to "know for sure" the winning horse in just 1 race each day?

No more–no less!

Just one winner a day.

Over the span of a year you'd probably sock away $5,000!

Probably $10,000!

Possibly $25,000!

Just imagine what it would be like to be a BIG winner at last...

★ You are on easy-street–able to afford with ease the best things in life, all the things you need, want and deserve: a new car every year, a mortgage-free home, a color TV set, wonderful vacations!

★ You sit back, put your feet up, and never worry about unpaid bills–because you NEVER have unpaid bills!

★ You are one of the lucky people who actually beat the races–regularly–who have the money to get all the luxuries in life – before you are too old to enjoy them!

Yes! I'll guarantee all this – and more!

It makes no difference if you've never bet on a horse in your life! It makes no difference if you've always considered yourself unlucky! It makes no difference if you've placed bet after bet and always come up a loser!

My "Winning System" will make you a winner or it won't cost you anything.

Perhaps you say: "How can you possibly guarantee I'll win $7500?" The answer is really simple.

I've discovered the 13 sure-fire points it takes to win – and I'll share them with you – for a price!

Turkish Coffee paid $9.60 at Aqueduct. If you had been using "The Winning System" you'd have had this winner–plus 3 other winners on the same day!

By GUY MICHAELS
© 1975, THE WINNING SYSTEM

An Impossible Dream? NO!

Let me explain what I mean:

By this time you must already know that "luck" has nothing to do with picking the winners. By this time you have discovered that certain people always win while others wind up in the poorhouse. By this time you have realized that you need "inside" information to win BIG money. By this time you understand that you need a system to beat the races.

My name is Guy Michaels and I'm not some race track tout or anything like that.

Pardon me if I boast a bit, but some of the biggest names in racing have called me a top Racing Analyst.

Jacinto Vasquez who was on Foolish Pleasure in the Kentucky Derby – Ron Turcotte who guided Secretariat to victory after victory – Joe Trovato who trained the great filly Chris Evert, Lenny Goodman, Braulio Baeza's agent, and Frank Wright, trainer and TV race coverage personality–all endorse my handicapping abilities.

As a matter of fact, on the WOR-TV coverage of the races from Bowie–I picked three out of four winners in a single day. And, there are over 500,000 racing fans who watched the show that can verify that fact!

I've been picking winners for years – for myself and for a few friends. And now I'll share these winning secrets with you.

It's so simple that I'm amazed no one ever thought of it before. I can assure you that I've never seen my 13 points printed anywhere before.

Now, you and I both know that there's a lot of money to be made by the man who comes up with a method of beating the races that really works.

I've done that – and now I'm ready to cash in on the goldmine.

I've written down everything you need to know to become a winner. It's in simple, easy-to-use, easy-to-understand form–in simple, non-racetrack language. I've had a small number of copies printed up–nothing fancy–just the facts and inside information you need. **It's called "The Winning System!"**

Why should I share these secrets with you? Because I'll make a fortune. If only 1 out of every 204 horse players buy my "Winning System"–I'll wind up with over a million dollars. (That's even better than I could do at the track!) And, perhaps most important of all–you'll be a big winner, too–or it won't cost you a dime!

Test "The Winning System" Without Betting One Thin Dime!

You don't have to place a single bet until you're certain my "Winning System" really works.

You are protected by this 100% no-risk, Double Guarantee:

1. If you don't like "The Winning System" when it arrives, return it for a full refund–no questions asked.

2. Keep and use "The Winning System" for a year. You MUST win at least $7500 following my 13 points – or return "The Winning System" next year. You still get an immediate refund – without quibble or question.

Simply play the "sure-thing" horses on paper for a few days–and see for yourself how much money you'd have taken in if you'd actually placed your bets.

Available Now!

There's only one way to see if I'm right, to get your guranteed copy of "The Winning System"–and that's to order it now–by mail. It's not available at any book store, newsstand or racetrack in the world–at any price. It's even been Registered and Copyrighted with the U.S. Government to make sure the secrets are not copied or stolen.

To get your guaranteed copy of "The Winning System" simply fill in and mail the Coupon below with your check, cash or money order for just $10–that's right–not the $25 or $50 you might expect to pay.

Don't delay. Obey that impulse to become a BIG winner at last. Order as soon as you can – TODAY if possible!

Guy Michaels

(Guy Michaels)

P.S. If you don't become a winner now that you know the secrets are available–you'll have no one to blame but yourself the next time you tear up those losing tickets!

Guy Michaels Winning System
964 Third Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10022

RSG-277

Make check payable and mail to:

Guy Michaels Winning System
964 Third Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10022

Yes! I want to pick sure winners! Rush me my guaranteed copy of "The Winning System!" Here is my $10. I am fully protected by your 100% no-risk Double Guarantee printed at the left. Thanks for this chance to be a BIG winner!

Cash, check or money order $____ enclosed.

Print Name

Mr.
Mrs.
Miss _____

Address _____

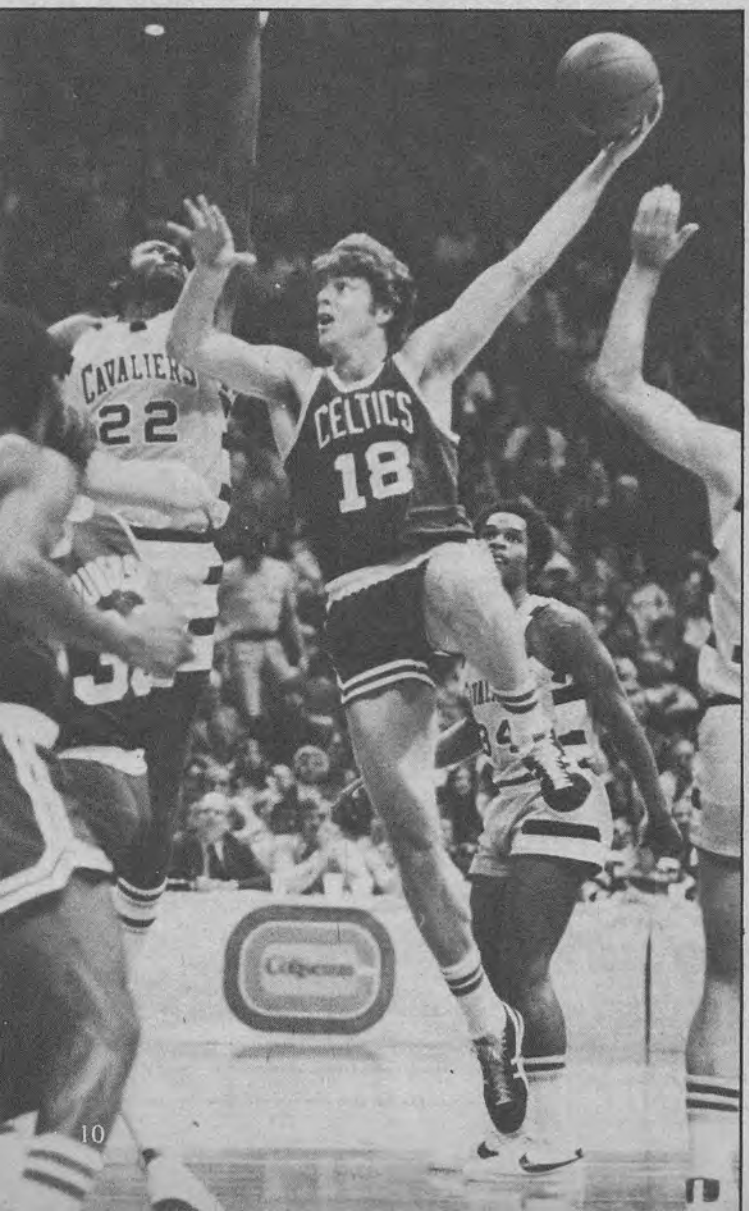
City _____

State _____ Zip _____

☐ I'm in a hurry. Enclosed is an extra $2.00 (a total of $12.00). Send my book via air mail.

In spite of the fact that some say he's not a winner and others contend there are bigger men around, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar remains the one player all others are measured by. That's why he heads the list of the game's most glamorous stars.

Celtics' Dave Cowens (18) is at his best in money game. He has paced his club to two championships in last three years.



In the Tale of the Tape Kareem Abdul-Jabbar no longer is the "Mr. Big" of the National Basketball Association but the long-limbed Laker is tops in everything else.

The four-time MVP of the NBA is in his second season with the Los Angeles team which he was supposed to haul to the front of the pack last year. He didn't. The Lakers didn't even make the playoffs, finishing with a deficit record of 40-42. There was no indictment of Kareem. His supporting cast

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (33) still tops the loop's big men with his iron-man heroics. Even a computer stands up to cheer him.

By Lee Andre

RATING THE N.B.A. CENTERS

Alvan Adams of Suns was good enough to be named Rookie-of-The-Year. He led all NBA centers in assists, but Phoenix front office says he has lot to learn about defense.

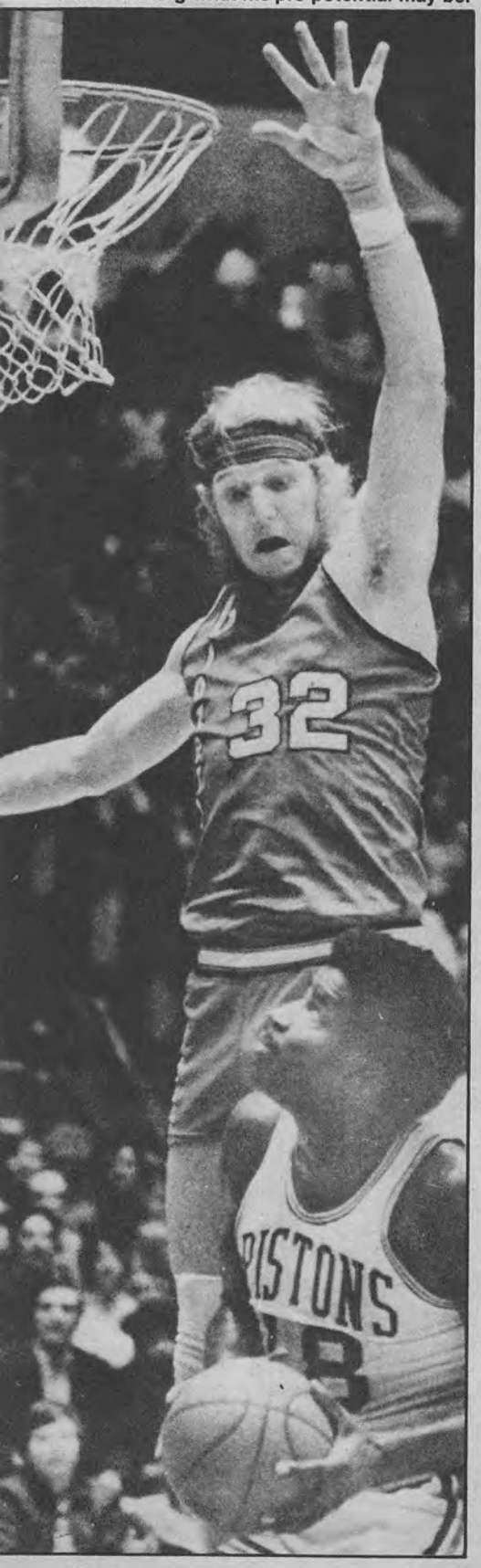
was slip-shod and Coach Bill Sharman was kicked upstairs into the front office as a result. Jerry West has taken over.

Kareem is a standout Number One in this magazine's rating of the NBA centers. Dave Cowens, the Red Rover of the Boston Celtics, is No. 2 and Bob McAdoo of Buffalo, sharp-eyed and sure-handed and a winner of three straight league scoring championships comes next as No. 3.

The rest of the Top Ten goes like this: No. 4-Artis Gilmore, Chicago. No. 5-Bob

Tom Burleson (16) has yet to use height and weight to full advantage. He has to learn techniques of dominating a contest. ▶

Until Bill Walton (32) of Trail Blazers beats the injury jinx, there's no way of ▼ determining what his pro potential may be.



Lanier, Detroit. No. 6-Alvan Adams, Phoenix. No. 7-Wes Unseld, Washington. No. 8-Elmore Smith, Milwaukee. No. 9-Tom Burleson, Seattle. No. 10-Bill Walton, Portland.

There are some tall talents in the rookie platoon. Robert Parish of Golden State, Mitch Kupchak of Washington and Leon Douglas of Detroit all are touted as coming stars. Caldwell Jones of Philadelphia and Dan Issel of Denver are classy invaders from the defunct ABA and there also is the Golden State tandem of Clifford Ray and George Johnson.

But Abdul-Jabbar is the man all the others are measured by. Finally, his true height—often rumored to soar all the way to 7-4—has been determined at 7-1 7/8. Kareem even admits he has to look up to Burleson, who was measured at a bit over 7-2. Gilmore also is in that area.

Kareem doesn't look up to anyone when it comes to shooting and handling a basketball, however. In winning his fourth MVP Award, he won his first rebounding championship, averaging 16.9 caroms a contest. He was tops in blocked shots with 4.1 per game and he wound up in second place in scoring with an average of 27.7 points, exceded only by McAdoo who had a 31.1 average.

Abdul-Jabbar won Iron Man honors also, leading in minutes played with 3,379. And he captured the Seagram's Seven Crowns of Sports Award, a contest decided by a computer. The whirring machine agreed with NBA observers that Kareem was the "most productive and consistent player" in the game last season.

At long last the consensus in the NBA is that Kareem is a superlative all-around player and not just a goon. In other words he would be a star even if he were a foot shorter. His former boss at Milwaukee, general manager Wayne Embry talked about it.

"Look at his hands, the quickness in the way he dribbles," Embry said. "I have

Wes Unseld (41) is smallest center in NBA, but makes up for that in physical strength and hard work. He had top field goal pct. ◀

Braves' Bob McAdoo showed improvement on defense after All-Star break practice session under the expert eye of Bill Russell. ▼

heard a lot of people say he would not be playing pro basketball if he were 6-2 instead of almost 7-2. They are just plain wrong. He would be playing in the NBA if he were 5-11."

General Manager Pete Newell of the Lakers also had a comment. "Abdul-Jabbar's physique is as well tapered as any man in the league no matter what his size," Newell said. "His leg development is beyond a man of his height. Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain and Willis Reed all were very strong men. But none had Kareem's leg development."

Dave Cowens has been the driving force in two NBA titles in three years for the Boston Celtics. Dave, who is a tick under 6-9, is a charging competitor and while he is surrounded by a team of classy veterans at Boston he sets the pace when the money games roll around.

He was rampaging and relentless as the Celtics wore down the Phoenix Suns in the title series last spring. He busted through and around the young Phoenix center, Alvan Adams, who played valiantly throughout the six-game series but found himself chasing a red comet in the 87-80 finale at Phoenix on June 6th.

Cowens had a 21 point scoring average for the six games and led his mates in minutes played with 798, rebounds with 296 and blocked shots with 13. His play in the playoffs each year has been savage and there is a reason for it. "The only thing that really matters for me is to play on a winning team," he said. "The only way to play on a winning team is to win a championship."

Before the Phoenix series, Dave had outplayed McAdoo in a six-game set and was virtually unstoppable on the offensive boards. When the Celtics took on Cleveland in the Eastern finals, Dave had to go against a tough old pro. Nate Thurmond, who has given all the star centers in the league rough moments at one time or

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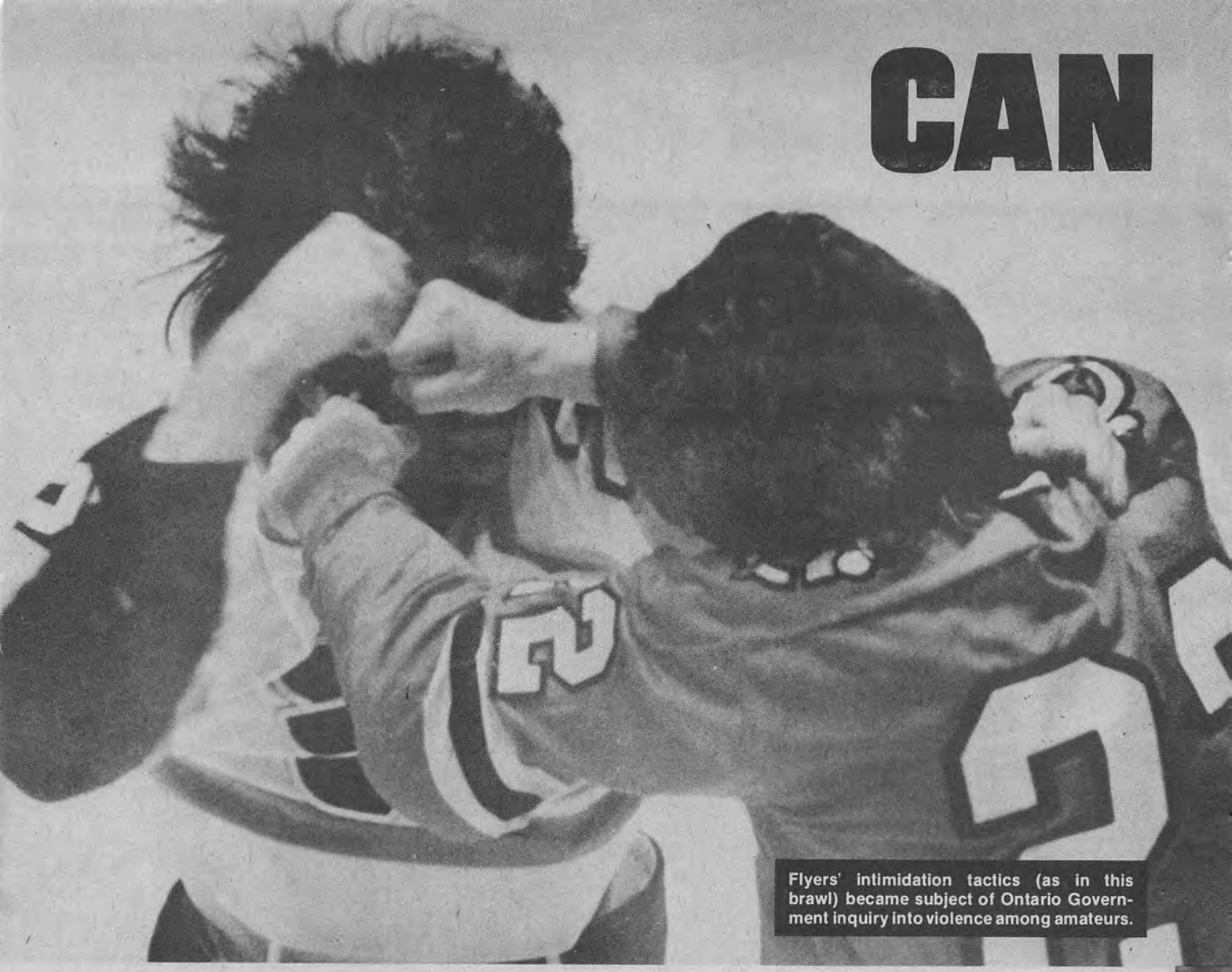
CAN



Flyers' intimidation tactics (as in this brawl) became subject of Ontario Government inquiry into violence among amateurs.

Led by mercury-bladed Guy Lafleur (10), Canadiens out-hustled and out-dug "Broad Street Bullies" in four straight Stanley Cup wins, thus ending "a reign of terror."

By Ben Olan

Shortly after the Montreal Canadians dethroned Philadelphia as National Hockey League titleholders by sweeping the Flyers four straight in the Stanley Cup finals last May, Canadians' defenseman Serge Savard made this blunt comment: "The Flyers were the worst thing to happen to hockey. The way they fight, the way they set an example for young kids. To sweep them, maybe we put an end to all the crap they stand for."

Savard, of course, was referring in inelegant language to the Flyers' bruising method of play which, combined with Coach Fred Shero's analytical all-rink strategy, made the Broad Street Bullies

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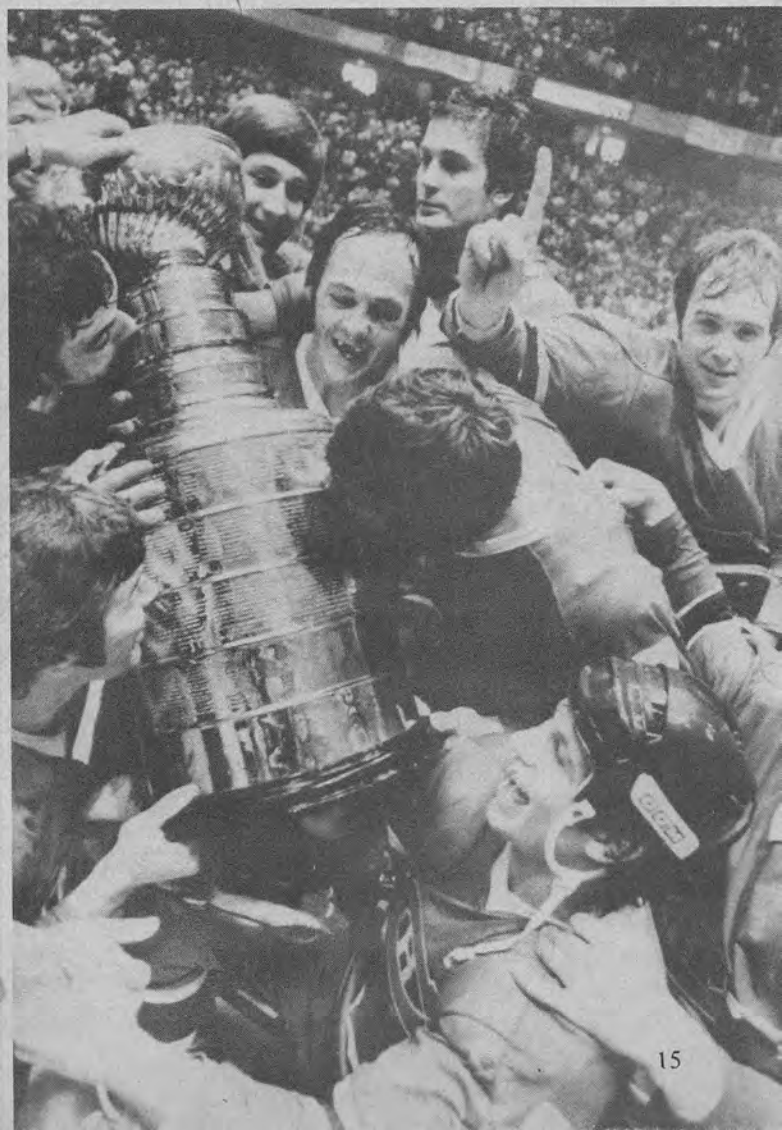
THE CANADIENS SAVE HOCKEY?

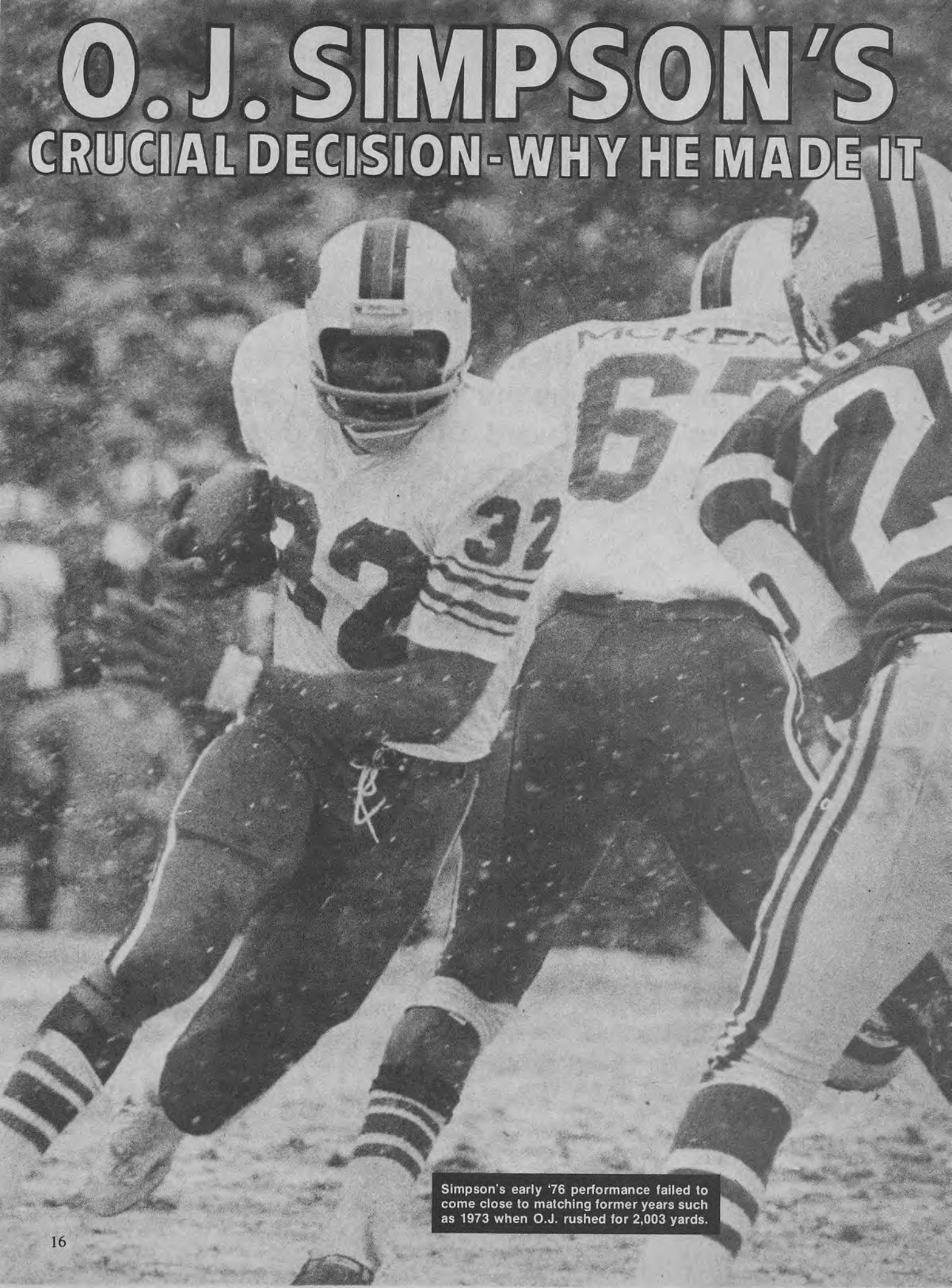
"The Flyers were the worst thing to happen to hockey. The way they fight, the way they set an example for young kids. To sweep them, maybe we put an end to all they stand for," said the Habs' Serge Savard. Others add that unless the other brawlers get the message, the game may well be doomed.

Purists hope return of Stanley Cup to smooth-skating, clean playing Canadiens will mark end of hooliganism on the ice.

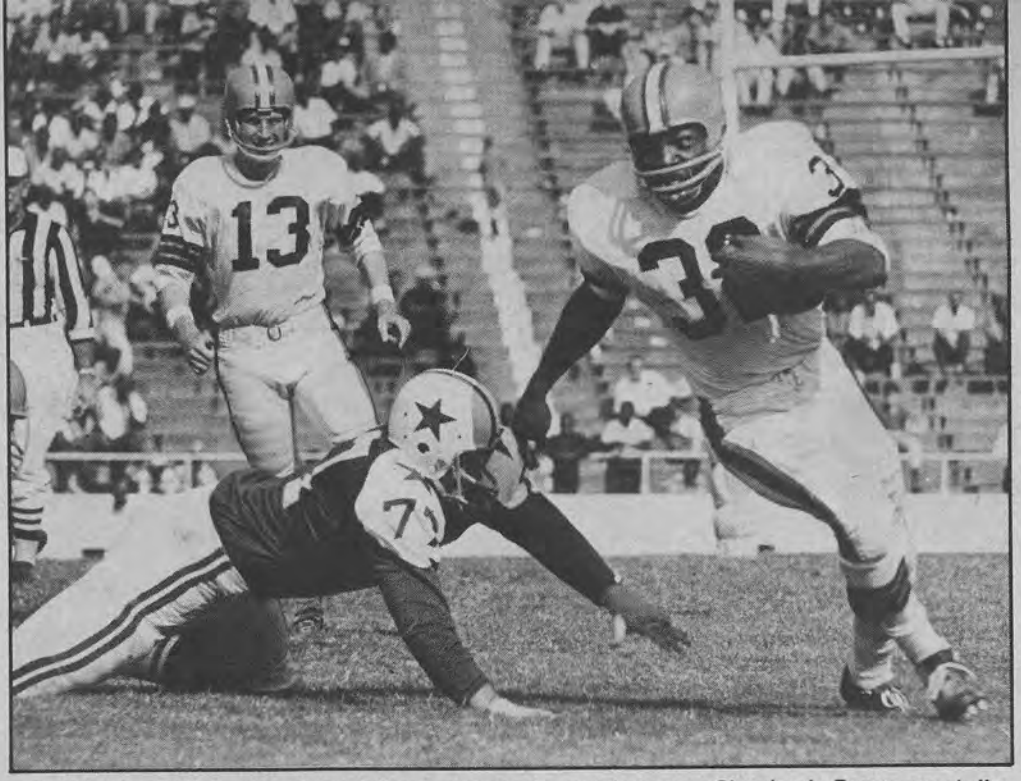


Bobby Hull says a hockey star's first responsibility is "to set an example for kids," feels tempo of game may be cause for some flareups, but "not for what is going on."

O.J. SIMPSON'S CRUCIAL DECISION-WHY HE MADE IT



Simpson's early '76 performance failed to come close to matching former years such as 1973 when O.J. rushed for 2,003 yards.



It would take Buffalo star at least three seasons to match former Cleveland Brown great Jim Brown (32) who racked up 12,312 career yards on 2,359 carries before opting for a movie career.

Despite the lure of Hollywood and the tremendous sums involved, the turning point came because of a very human consideration—a man's goal for his family.

By Sam Cosmello

O.J. Simpson lounged in a director's chair, thumbing through the script for a TV drama in which he was to play the part of a football star with a strange, exotic disease.

Ralph Wilson, owner of the Buffalo Bills, hovered in the background, brandishing a five-year contract.

"All right," said the Juice. "We're not anywhere near an agreement. I want to be traded."

"I spoke with four or five clubs," said the owner of the Buffalo franchise in the NFL. "But we never got around to talking about personnel. Nobody will meet his price."

The price was $250,000 for five years. And the year was 1969. O.J. was fresh off the Southern California campus and not too anxious to shuffle off to Buffalo where the winters are cold. This despite the fact that the Bills held exclusive rights to him after making him their No. 1 draft choice.

It all sounds kind of familiar, doesn't it? Seven years, 8,123 yards and 61 touchdowns later, O.J. was back in the same box this summer, talking about retirement while the Bills sweated it out in training camp.

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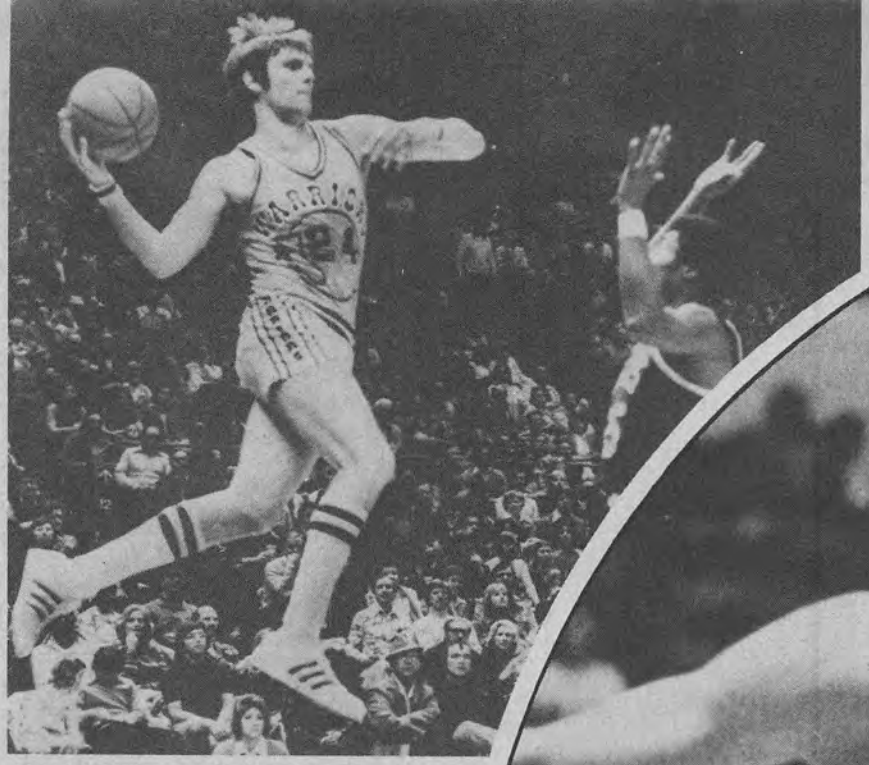
Simpson started current season only 474 yards behind Hall of Famer Jim Taylor (31) who had 8,597.



Rick Barry was one of four ABA standouts who proved that a true superstar had nothing to fear from competing in the NBA.

Rick Barry did it, and so did George McGinnis, Spencer Haywood and Billy Cunningham...that is, establish themselves as superstars both in the American and National Basketball Associations.

Now, it is Julius Erving's turn to prove he belongs in the class of the others.

Barry, McGinnis, Haywood and Cunningham attained their lofty positions in both the ABA and NBA by jumping leagues. Erving, however, patiently toiled for five years in the struggling, often overlooked ABA, waiting and hoping that some day it would merge with the older, more established and better accepted NBA.

(Continued on page 62)

Net president Roy Boe hugged Erving after team won ABA title. But frictions arose later over "Dr. J.'s" '76-'77 pay demands.

▲ Erving has been billed by Net coach as the greatest player in history of game. He'll be focal point of NBA attention all season.

Nobody in the annals of pro basketball has ever been asked to undergo the microscopic probing which has become the burden of the 76er star. Having copped the now-defunct ABA's Most Valuable Player Award three times in a row and enough other honors to paper a wall, he now must prove himself all over again. He must be more than great.

By Bert Rosenthal

WILL JULIUS ERVING'S DREAM BECOME A NIGHTMARE?

THE STORY BEHIND

"I probably know better than anybody how smart he is. Right now his play calling is probably as good as that which has ever been done." This from a rival who fought the Steeler passer tooth and nail for the number one spot. It tells a lot about how he came of age, but not the complete saga.

By Charles Morey

Terry Bradshaw is so dumb that at 28 he's a two-time Super Bowl champion quarterback, the owner of a 400-acre cattle ranch in Grand Cane, La., a possible success story in the lucrative country singing field and the husband of a dazzling ice-skating star.

You should be so dumb!

Ever since his rookie season with the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1970, Terry has been classified as a loser in the I-Q department. Many carping critics have put him down as a zero in that category and some have carped enough to rank him double-zero.

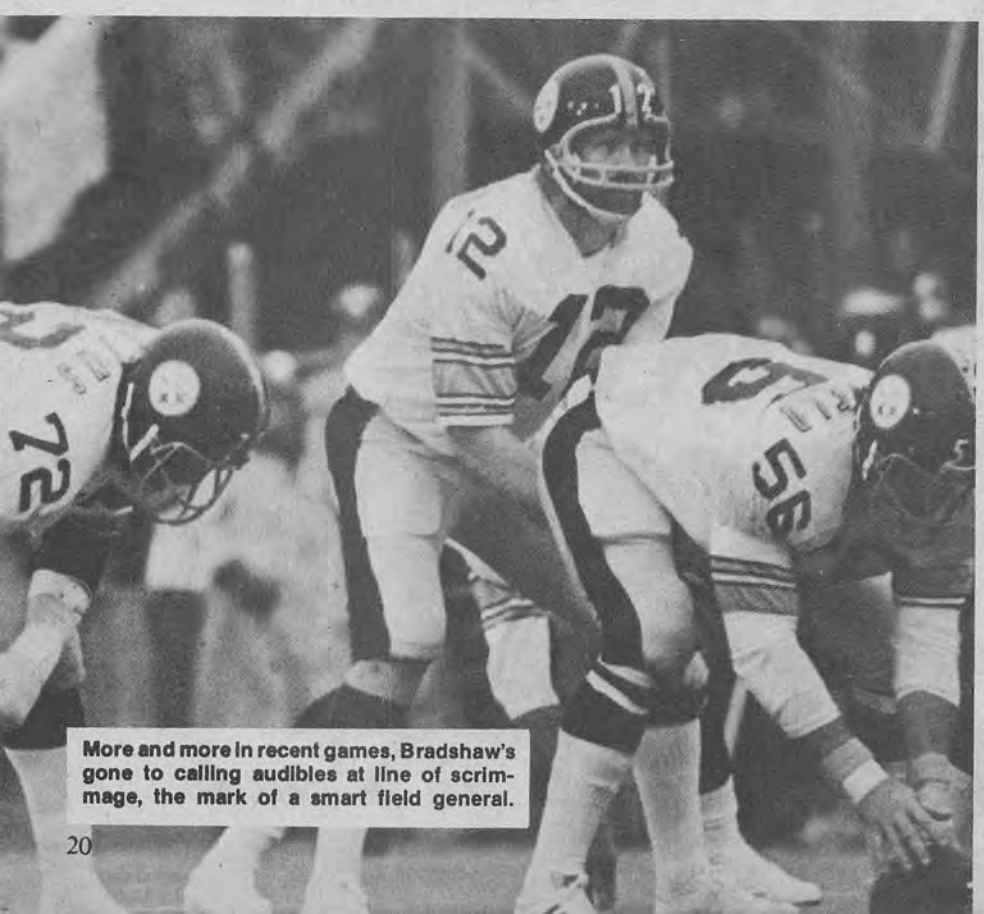
True, he was slow to learn the intricacies of quarterbacking in the National Football League. Terry owns up to it. The quarterback position in the NFL takes almost as long to master as law or medicine but it pays just as well and on occasion even better.

However, the somewhat balding Bradshaw of 1976 is not the rawboned rookie of 1970. Terry has developed poise, savvy, a smoother brand of leadership and he has blended all those things into the cool confidence of a championship quarterback.

He is expected to play a key part in a projected Steeler drive toward a third straight appearance in the Super Bowl, which would tie the record of the Miami Dolphins, and a third straight victory, which would set a new mark.

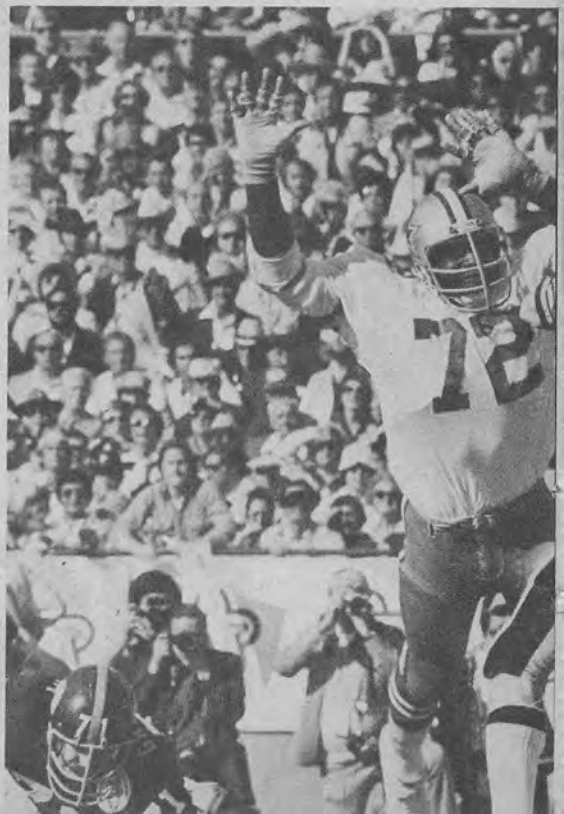
If those two things happen, perhaps this will be the year Terry gets MVP ranking in the Super contest. He had to play second fiddle last year to Lynn Swann and the previous season to hard-running Franco Harris.

Nobody got more annoyed over the accusation of stupidity placed against Bradshaw than the long-time reserve quarterback for the Steelers, Terry Hanratty. There was no bitter rivalry between the two men, who are close friends.



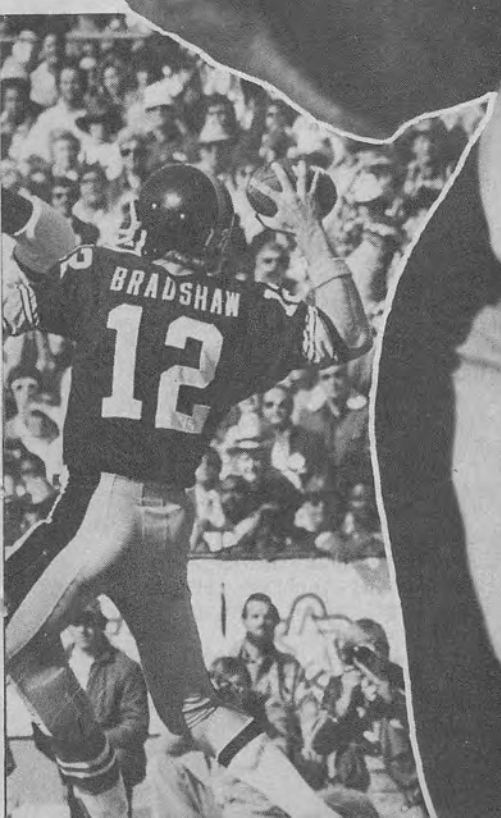
More and more in recent games, Bradshaw's gone to calling audibles at line of scrimmage, the mark of a smart field general.

Repeatedly in Super Bowl win over Dallas, Bradshaw showed raw courage by daring the vaunted Cowboy pass rush to spot receiver.



THE BIG CHANGE IN TERRY BRADSHAW

Bradshaw insists on running all-out like a fullback. He refuses to fold up when he is hit unlike majority of quarterbacks.

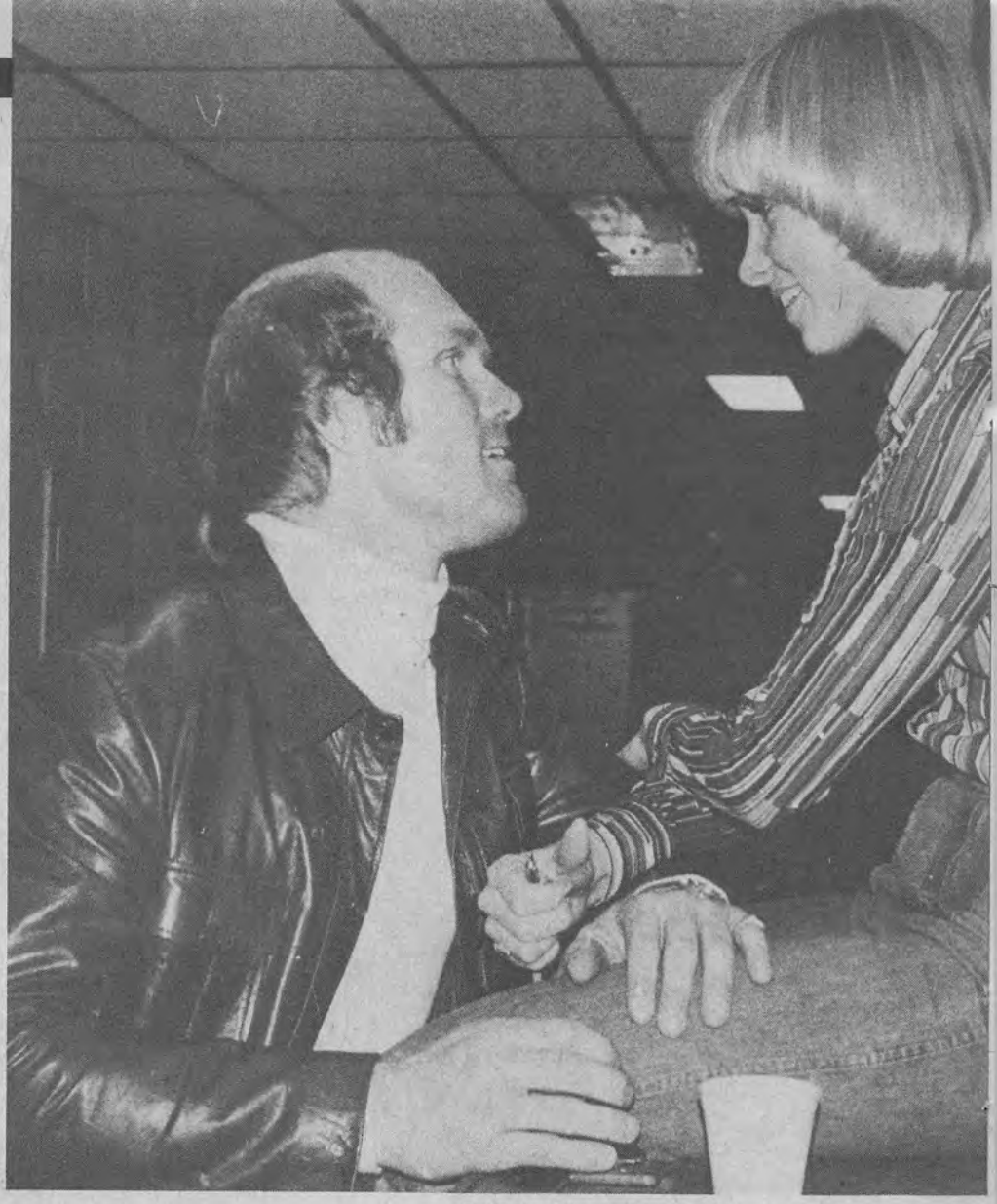


"What does Terry have to do to prove himself to people?" Hanratty grumbled. "He led us to two Super Bowl titles. I was with him in the quarterbacking meeting every day. I probably know better than anybody how smart he is. Right now his play calling is probably as good as that's ever been done."

Bradshaw's play-calling steered the Steelers to a club record of 373 points last season as they topped the Central Division of the AFC. He was intercepted only nine times. Terry was first-rate in the playoffs as Pittsburgh beat Baltimore, 28-10, got by Oakland, 16-10, and then downed Dallas, 21-17, for Super Bowl honors.

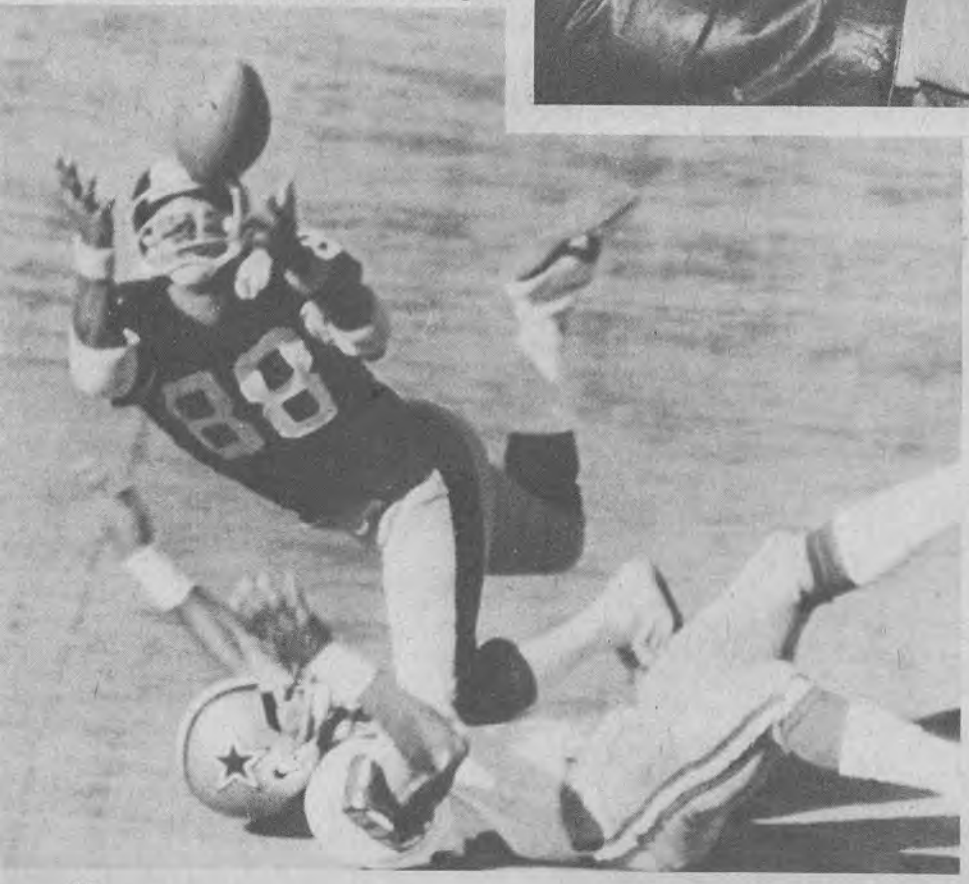
Before the Super Bowl game, incredible as it seems, a T-V reporter shoved a mike under Terry's nose and actually inquired: "Is it true that Dallas is going to beat you guys in the Super Bowl because Staubach is a much smarter quarterback than you?"

Roger did take the Cowboys to the first score of the game in the opening period on a 29-yard pass play with Drew Pearson but it was set up by a bobbled snap from center by punter Bobby Walden of the Steelers. Bradshaw then replied with a beautiful eight-play, 67-yard scoring drive, quarterbacking brilliantly, and getting a touchdown on a seven-yard pass to tight end Randy Grossman.



Both Bradshaw and new bride, Jo Jo, are intensely religious. She gained fame by winning national figure skating championship.

Bradshaw found himself playing second fiddle to sensational receiver Lynn Swann in Super Bowl when Swann's catches iced game

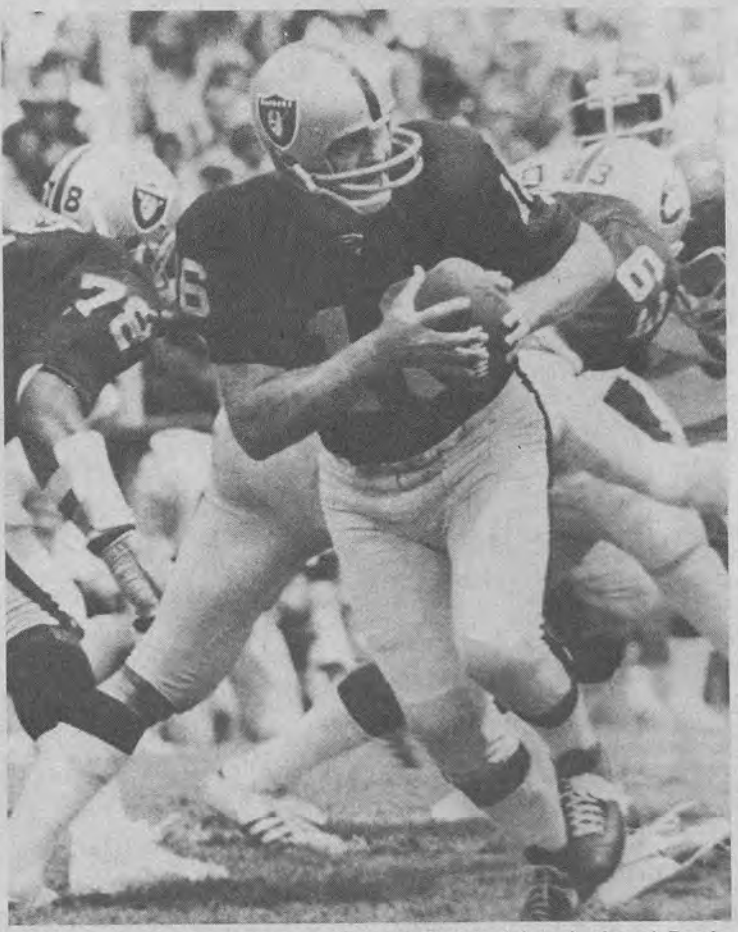


The only scoring in the second quarter was a field goal by Toni Fritsch of Dallas and the Cowpokes took their 10-7 lead through a scoreless third period and into the final quarter. But that's when Bradshaw showed his winning class.

A safety on a blocked punt and two field goals by Roy Gerela gave the Steelers a 15-10 lead, hardly a comfortable one. With six and a half minutes left, the Steelers needed another score, preferably a touchdown but at least a field goal. They got the ball on their own 30 and Bradshaw made his move.

The Cowboys expected him to kill the clock. Terry went for broke. On third and four from his 36, he faded to pass. The Cowboys were blitzing, the fiery safety Cliff Harris leading the charge. Bradshaw had flying Lynn Swann as his primary receiver but needed time.

Harris wheeled around the pass pocket and lunged for Terry. Bradshaw stepped up, eluding Harris, and fired a big rainbow far down field. As he did a driving



Retirement of Raider veteran George Blanda (above) placed Bradshaw sixth among active AFC passers with almost 10,000 yards.

lineman, Larry Cole, hit him hard with a pounding shoulder tackle. Down went Bradshaw.

But Swann was catching the ball over his left shoulder crossing the Dallas five-yard line and in he went for the big insurance touchdown. Harris and Cole were standing over Bradshaw looking down field and shaking their heads. Terry was helped from the field holding a towel to the left side of his head. He had a concussion and did not return. But the big touchdown pass gave the Steelers the needed points to overcome a final scoring toss from Staubach to Percy Howard.

The rugged Steeler linemen admire Bradshaw for his ability to play in pain and to return to the game after being hurt. "Did you see the way Terry came limping off the field at halftime in the playoff game with Baltimore?" a Steeler forward said. "We never thought he'd return. But he did come back. The kid's tough."

This was the same lineman, who recalling his days as a kid watching Walt Disney movies, had said a few years before: "You want your quarterback to be a bright and alert guy like Bugs Bunny. Bradshaw's too much like Elmer Fudd."

Nobody knows Terry better than his father, Bill Bradshaw. After the Super Bowl game the elder Bradshaw talked about his son and the way he has developed into a top quarterback. "There are no shortcuts to success," he said. "Terry had a talent and he worked to develop it. He's realizing the results of it now."

The senior Bradshaw also commented on the stories that Terry was not the

(Continued on page 78)

John Stallworth (82) has been underrated by many. But Bradshaw was quick to note his talent and has made him a prime target.

"I've seen them all," says 68 year-old Paul Richards who has 50 baseball years behind him. "Not even Babe Ruth caused this much excitement." Here's why.

Fidrych is the most relaxed person in the Tiger dugout. He's extremely popular with teammates.

A publicity man's dream, Fidrych is becoming nation's most photographed athlete. He poses here with Big Bird of Sesame Street.

By Maury Allen

To millions of kids who hear it on television, to millions of adults who heard it on radio as kids or saw it in the movies, the cry is familiar. *Look! up in the sky! it's a bird! it's a plane! it's Superman!*

No bird, no plane, not even Superman has made the impact on the American sports scene that The Bird, a hawk-nosed, curly-headed 21-year-old right-handed pitcher for the Detroit Tigers made in the summer of '76.

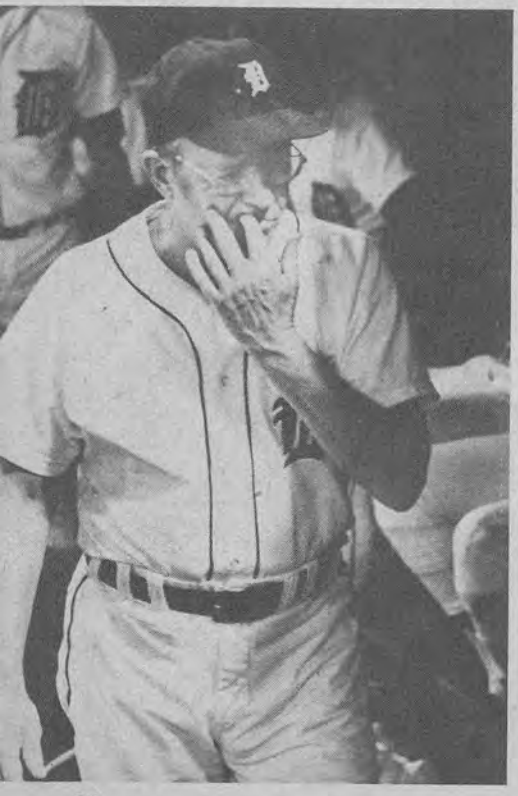
The Bird—known by few as Mark Steven Fidrych—came almost from thin air or appeared out of a capsule of Krypton to jolt the American League out of its stodginess, bring people happily by the

Despite all his flaky antics, when he toes the rubber, Fidrych is a thorough pro with a blazing fast ball and pinpoint control

THE SECRET THAT MADE MARK FIDRYCH AN INSTANT SUPERSTAR

Bruce Kim (blocking plate) has become Fidrych's personal catcher; says, "He makes catching easy and comfortable."

Tiger manager Ralph Houk says Fidrych has excellent stuff and an ability to keep the ball down, which is harder than it looks.



hundreds of thousands into American League parks, amuse, entertain and excite with his pitching, his personality, his antics. Never before (and maybe never again) has baseball seen the likes of Bird Fidrych.

"I've seen them all," said Chicago White Sox manager Paul Richards, who has been in the game a half century." No one has ever caused this much excitement. Babe Ruth on his best day hasn't done what this kid has done."

What Fidrych did was simple. He talked a good game and pitched a better one. He entertained and amused. He was warm and wonderful. He acted like he was having fun. He turned a nation on to the old ways, the old values, the old dreams. He filled ball parks and had a wonderful time while he was doing it. And he said the magic words.

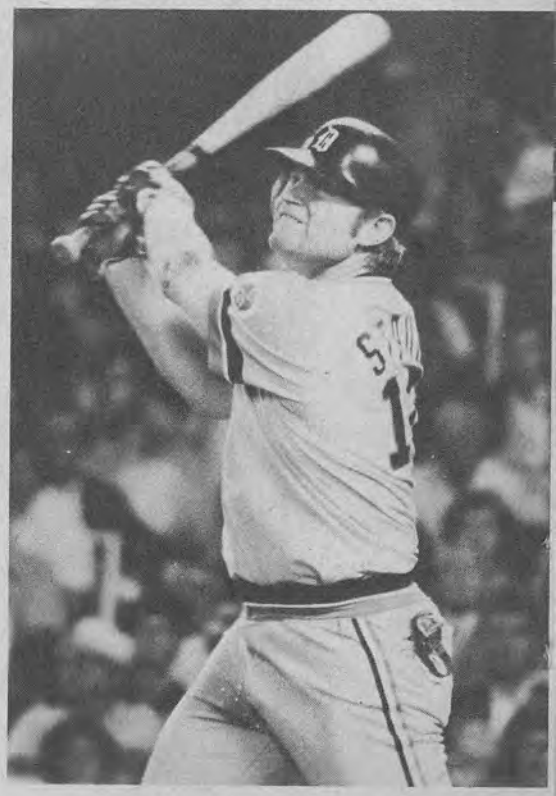
"I'm making enough money," he said. "I wouldn't be making this much if I was still pumping gas back in Connecticut."

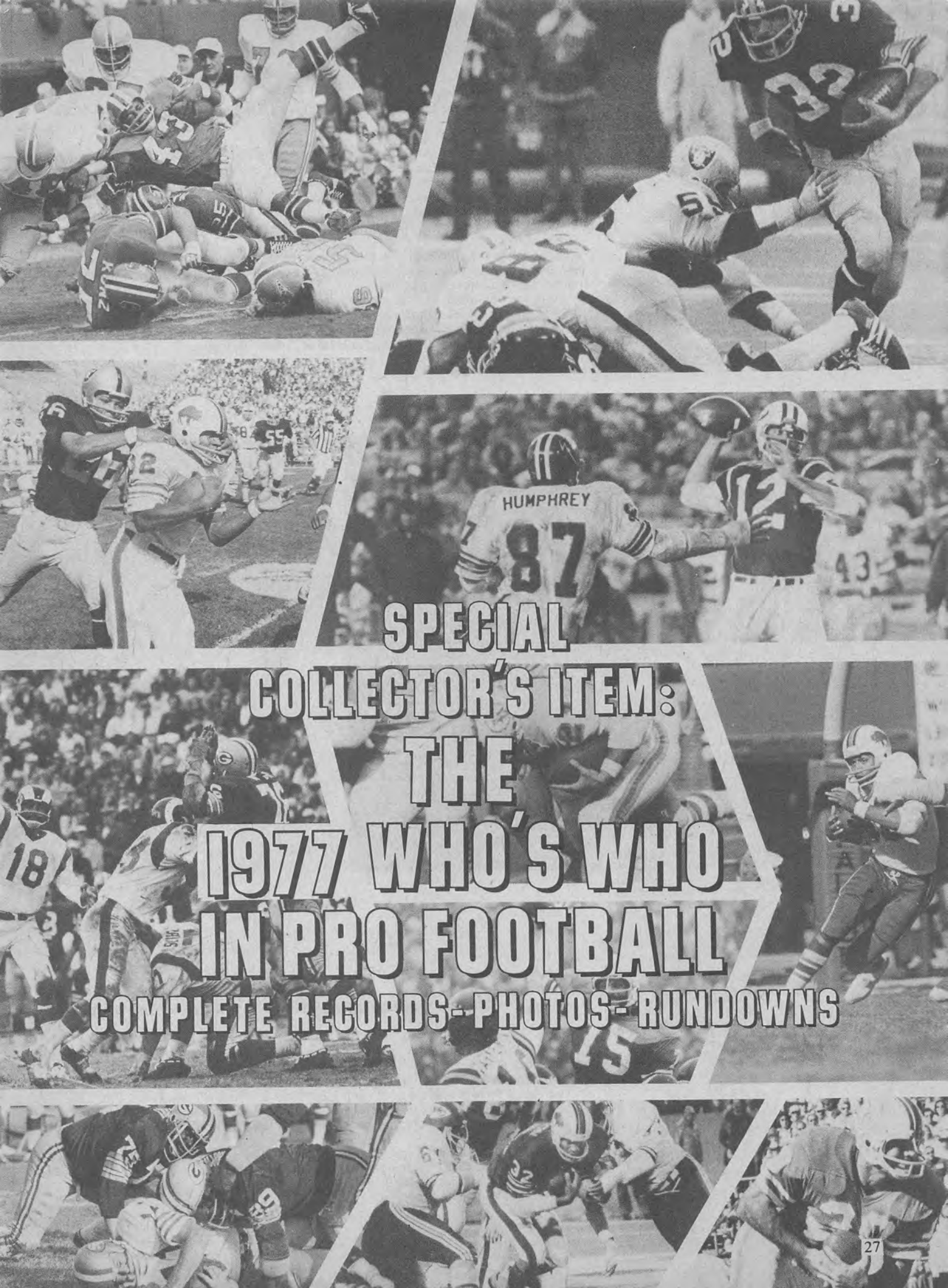
Ever since "Wee Willie" Keeler hit them where they weren't and Cy Young pitched them where they weren't, ball players have followed success with demands for financial rewards. Fidrych has expressed disinterest.

Is he a madman? Or is it a calculated plan? Whatever the true motivation, the very act of shunning more money in the same season when ball players had a short spring training over labor negotiations, in

(Continued on page 75)

Bengal slugger Rusty Staub says he's never seen a player who's as loose off the field and yet concentrates so hard during game.





SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ITEM:

THE 1977 WHO'S WHO IN PRO FOOTBALL

COMPLETE RECORDS - PHOTOS - RUNDOWNS

KEN ANDERSON
CINCINNATI BENGALS
Born, Batavia, Ill. Feb. 15, 1949; Lives, Lakeside Park, Ky.; Augustana; QB. Ht. 6-2; Wt. 211.

Ken Anderson is the All-American boy type, a personable young man from a small town in Illinois who followed an unlikely route from unsung Augustana College to the top of the National Football League. For the last two years Anderson has led all NFL quarterbacks with ratings of 94.1 in 1975 and 95.9 in 1974.

Anderson had his best year in 1975 when he completed 228 of 377 passes for 3,169 yards and 21 touchdowns. He is the leading active passer in pro football with an 85.5 career rating.

Scouted by Bill Walsh, who moved on this year from a Cincinnati assistant coach to San Diego assistant, Anderson has made the Bengals' use of a third-round selection of him look like a stroke of genius.

Honors continue to descend on Anderson who was the Dodge Man of the Year in 1975, winner of the Bart Starr Award in Milwaukee, honorary chairman of the Cincinnati Easter Seal drive and a member of the Board of Directors of Hope College in Kentucky, an organization that houses and takes care of orphans.

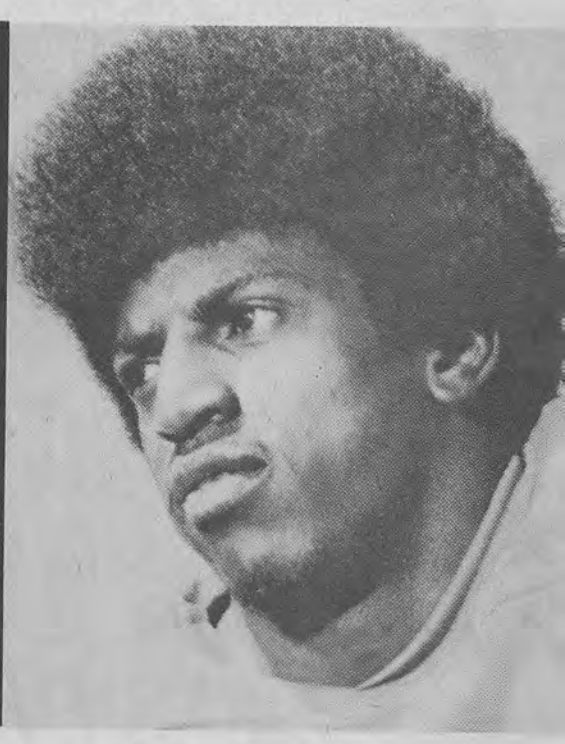
OTIS ARMSTRONG
DENVER BRONCOS
Born, Chicago, Ill., Nov. 11, 1950; Lives, Denver, Colo.; Purdue; RB; Ht. 5-10; Wt. 196.

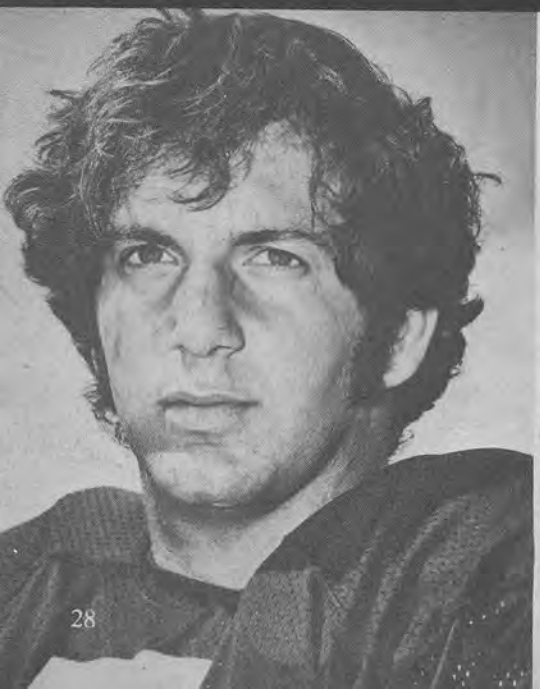
For Otis Armstrong the year 1975 was a year to forget. Denver's flash running ace spent most of a frustrating season waiting for a severe hamstring pull to heal. It never did come around. As a result the man who rocketed to 1,407 yards in 1974 wound up with a mere 155 yards in 1975.

Armstrong was averaging 9.0 yards per carry when he went out with bruised ribs in the second game last year. He tried to come back too soon the following week but lasted only one play. In his next start he suffered the hamstring pull that finished him for the year.

Great speed and the ability to change directions at full speed are Armstrong's trademarks. Coach John Ralston calls him, "the greatest draw runner in the game." He has tremendous thighs, actually larger than former heavyweight champion George Foreman's despite his 5-10 frame.

Otis set college records at Purdue and also many important Big Ten marks, rushing for 3,315 yards in his career and winning total offense title without throwing a pass. With the Broncos he has become a better than fair receiver and a good kickoff return man.





BOB AVELLINI
CHICAGO BEARS
Born, Aug. 28, 1943, New York; Lives, New Hyde Park, N.Y.; Maryland; QB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 212.

Bob Avellini took tover the quarterbacking job with the Chicago Bears in the 10th game of his rookie season in 1975. He started the last four games and under his guidance the Bears, 4-10 on the year, split at 2-2.

The Bears feel he has the poise and leadership to bring Chicago back into contention. They liked his comment when he was picked in the sixth round of the draft.

"I intend to play like a first round pick," said the New Yorker who played his college ball at Maryland.

His stats for last year were 67 completions in 126 attempts for 942 yards, six touchdowns and a 53.2 percentage. He had 11 intercepted.

The Bears were impressed with his showing in the Senior Bowl when he played with the cream of the college crop.

PETE BANASZAK
OAKLAND RAIDERS
Born, Crivitz, Wis., July 21, 1944; Lives, San Ramon, Calif.; Miami; RB; Ht. 6-0; Wt. 210.

What running back never started a game in 1975 but still tied O.J. Simpson with 16 touchdowns by rushing? The answer, of course, is Pete Banaszak, the Raiders' big short range scoring punch.

When they voted Pete the award as "The Player Who Best Exemplifies the Pride and Spirit of the Oakland Raiders," they didn't make a mistake. He also won the NEA Third Down award as the Oakland MVP.

Although the Raiders had such runners as Marv Hubbard and Clarence Davis, Banaszak was their leading rusher with 672 yards, the high mark of his career. He also had his second best game ever, 116 yards against the Falcons.

A three-letter man at Crivitz, Wisc. High in football, basketball and track (state discus champ), he moved on to Miami where he made the Dean's List and earned a Bachelor of Education degree.

Banaszak has played in 77 consecutive games, seldom as a starter. Each summer he goes to camp expecting to hear that he is expendable. At the age of 32 in his 11th pro year, it always is a possibility but Pete thinks he can go on forever.

STEVE BARTKOWSKI
ATLANTA FALCONS
Born, Nov. 12, 1952, Des Moines, Ia.; Lives Atlanta; California; QB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 213

In just one season Steve Bartkowski became a star in the National Football League. The tall quarterback from the University of California, the No. 1 draft choice of the Falcons (and of the NFL), gave Atlanta the passing they've been seeking and the fans one exciting Sunday after another.

The Falcons had traded George Kunz, an outstanding offensive tackle and their No. 1 draft pick to Baltimore for the leaderoff spot in the NFL draft. The handsome Californian made the deal stand up for the Falcons.

He completed 115 of 255 passes for 1,622 yards and 13 touchdowns although he missed 3 2/3 games because of an injury to his left elbow. This happened against Cincinnati in the sixth game and knocked Steve out of action. He sustained bone chips in the left elbow that required surgery after the season ended.

Bartkowski was one of the top contenders for NFL Rookie of the Year honors. He could have made a career in pro baseball, too. He was a catcher and first baseman and hit the long ball.

CARL BARZILAUSKAS
NEW YORK JETS
Born, Waterbury, Conn.; March 19, 1951; Lives, Bloomington, Ind.; Indiana; DT; Ht. 6-6; Wt. 280.

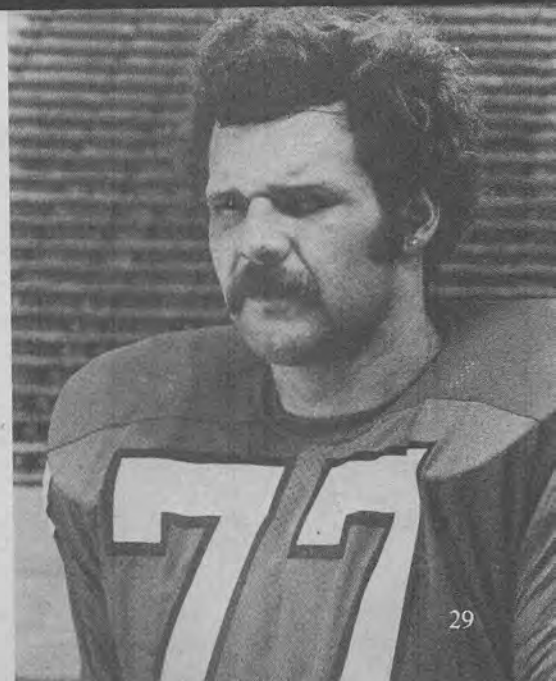
The Jets picked a real gem in 1974 when they made Carl Barzilauskas their No. 1 draft choice. Barzo has been a starter from his rookie season and has All-Pro potential.

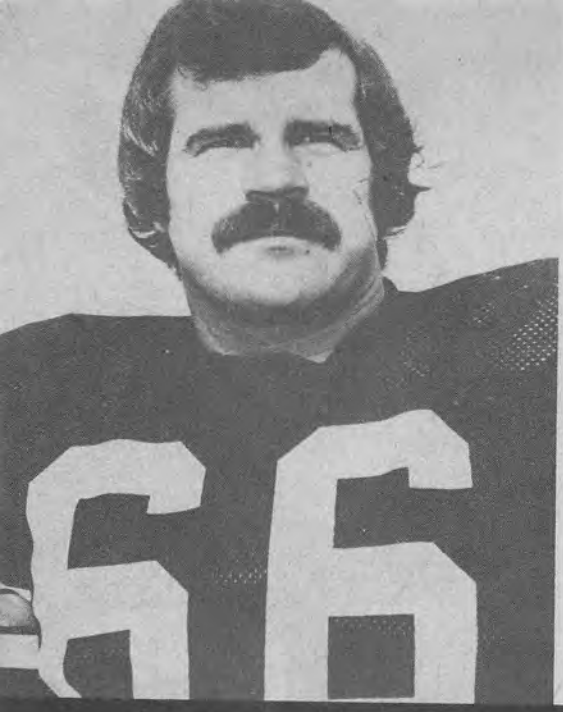
"Carl can be as good as he wants to be," says Walt Michaels, the Jets' defensive coordinator. He has the size, strength and will to succeed but needs to learn how to shed blockers faster.

Barzo suffered some lapses in 1975 along with the entire Jet team that floundered to a 3-11 season after finishing on the upbeat with a winning streak in 1974. The opposition often double-teamed him.

Miami center Jim Langer called Barzo "one of the strongest players I've ever faced." He's also one of the quickest with 5.0 speed to match his strength.

Barzo's uncle, Fritz Barzilauskas, played with the Giants in the early 1950s. The Jet star comes from Waterbury, Conn. but attended Indiana University and now makes his home in Bloomington, Ind. where he owns a lounge known as "Barzo's Blitz."





BILL BERGEY
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES
Born, Feb. 9, 1945; South Dayton, N.Y.; Lives, Chadds Ford, Pa.; Arkansas State; LB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 253.

Bill Bergey comes to hit. The opposition knows when the Philadelphia Eagles' outstanding linebacker is in action by the fierceness of his play.

"I like to hit a man hard," says burly Bill. "I like them to think for a moment or two and then remember who hit them."

The Eagles gave up a flock of draft choices to get the great linebacker from the Cincinnati Bengals on July 10, 1974. He had been the Bengals' No. 2 draft choice in 1969.

A native of South Dayton, N.Y. who played for Arkansas State, he was picked for the Little All-American team. In the pros, he's at the top. He was named All-Pro in 1974 and 1975.

He already ranks with the famed Chuck Bednarik among the team's all-time middle linebackers.

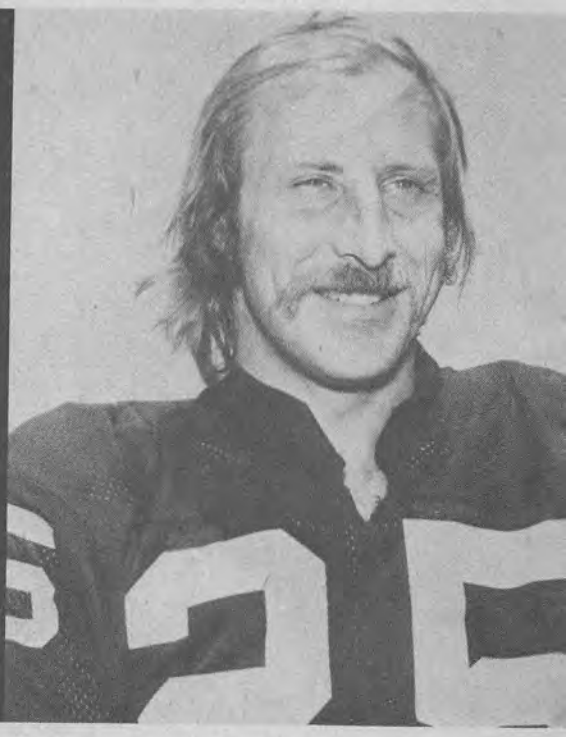
FRED BILETNIKOFF
OAKLAND RAIDERS
Born, Erie, Pa. Feb. 23, 1943; Lives, Valley Center, Calif.; Florida State; WR; Ht. 6-1. Wt. 190.

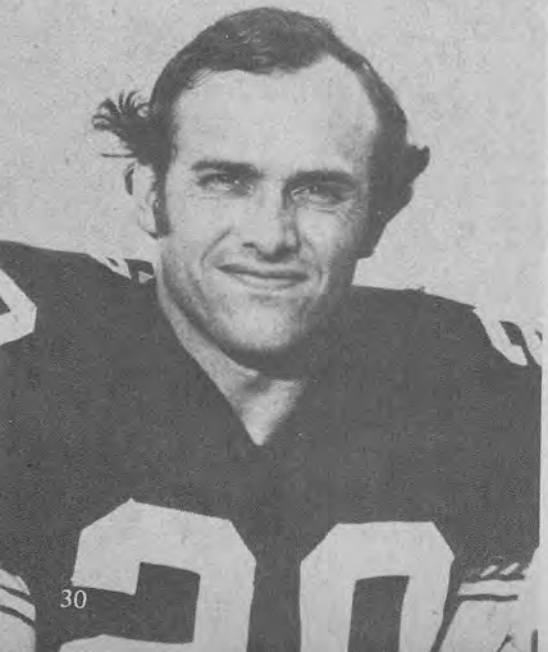
Fred Biletnikoff comes of his athletic ability naturally. His father was a national AAU boxing champion and his brother, Bob, was a college football star at Miami and a minor league baseball player in the New York Yankee chain.

Fred is the most prominent member of the family, originally based in Erie, Pa. One of the all-time great receivers, he currently rates second only to Charley Taylor among active receivers. With Taylor out of action on the injured reserve, Fred actually is No. 1 and No. 9 on the all-time list with his career total of 493 receptions.

Biletnikoff does not have the speed of teammate Cliff Branch or the strength of a Riley Odoms but he can make all the moves. He can take a corner man out of his socks with his patented sideline moves. The ball seldom bounces off his sticky hands because he uses a greasy substance to help him hang on to the passes that Ken Stabler throws his way.

He has caught 40 or more passes for a record nine straight years and scored two or more touchdowns for 10 straight years. His career totals are 7,962 yards and 62 TDs.





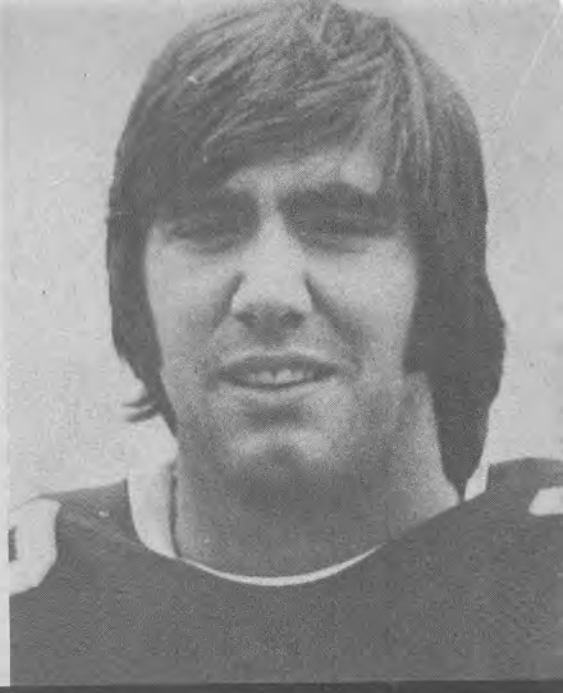
ROCKY BLEIER
PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Born, Appleton, Wis., March 5, 1946; Lives, Allison Park, Pa.; Notre Dame; RB; Ht. 5-11; Wt. 210.

The team of Rocky Bleier and Franco Harris has helped carry the Steelers through back-to-back Super Bowl successes. In the words of Coach Chuck Noll, Bleier "blocks like a guard." He also can put his head down and plough straight ahead with the football. For the second straight year he was the team's second leading rusher with 528 yards in 1975.

Rocky's story is well known but it bears repeating. Drafted in the 16th round out of Notre Dame in 1968 he spent most of his early career on special teams. He was drafted into the Army in the midst of his rookie year and was seriously injured in Vietnam. His pro football career appeared over.

Returning to the Steelers in 1972, still recuperating from his Vietnam injuries, Rocky did little but play on the specials until 1974 when he moved into a regular running back job. He capped that season with 98 yards vs. Oakland in the AFC title game and 65 against Minnesota in Super Bowl IX.

Awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star and two campaign ribbons for his Vietnam service, Rocky now works as an investment banker in Pittsburgh during the offseason. He is married and has one daughter, Samantha.



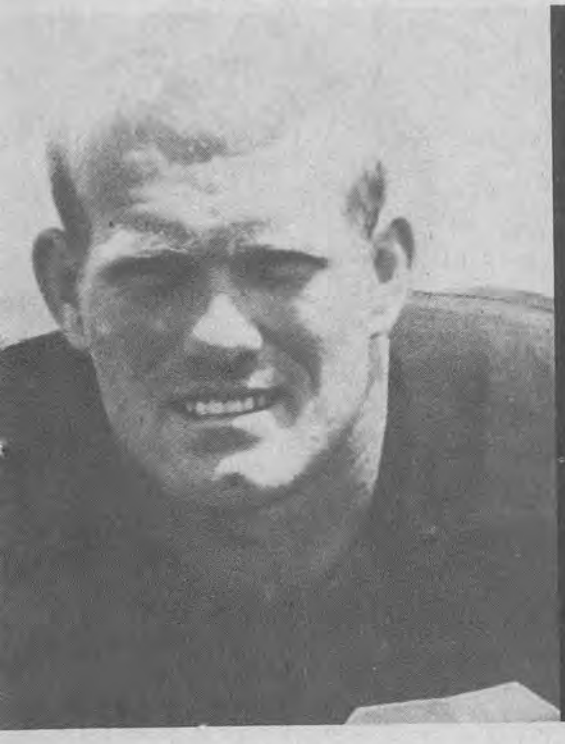
MIKE BORYLA
PHILADELPHIA
Born, March 6, 1951, Long Island, New York; Lives, Clementon, N.J.; Stanford; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 200.

The Philadelphia Eagles are confident Mike Boryla will become their No. 1 quarterback and go on to long-time stardom, taking the Eagles on a high ride with him.

He took over Roman Gabriel's post in the final three games of the 1974 season and the rookie won them all. In five starts last season he led the team to a 2-3 record but topped the club in pass completions with a 52.4 percentage.

Boryla, indicated he was ready to take over a starting job with his coolness under fire in the 1976 Pro Bowl. Named to the NFC team as a late replacement, he tossed two TD passes in the final minutes of a 23-20 victory.

The son of former Knick basketball star Vince Boryla starred for Stanford in his college days.



TERRY BRADSHAW
PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Born, Shreveport, La., Sept. 12, 1948; Lives, Grand Crane, La.; Louisiana Tech; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 210.

They don't talk about Terry Bradshaw as "the dumb quarterback" any more. After two straight Super Bowl triumphs the football critics finally are beginning to give Bradshaw his due.

Bradshaw finished Super Bowl X in the locker room, woozy and dazed after catching the full force of a Cowboy blitz. He didn't even know the pass he threw as he went down wound up as a gamewinning touchdown catch by Lynn Swann.

The man who was chosen first in the 1970 draft out of Louisiana Tech had his finest season in 1975 when he received All-Pro recognition for the first time and was named Player of the Year by Football News. Terry has become the Steelers' all-time leader in passing yardage with 9,579, passing attempts with 1,513 and completions with 754. Two more TD passes will put him over the hump in that department.

Terry's 1975 production of 18 TDs and a 57.7 completion percentage was his career high. Although Coach Chuck Noll still winces when Bradshaw takes off on a run (he rushed for 210 yards and 3 TDs) the quarterback is learning to pick his spots most of the time.

The newlywed Bradshaws live in Grand Crane, Louisiana where Terry manages a 400-acre cattle ranch. His wife, Jo Jo is a former star with the Ice Capades.

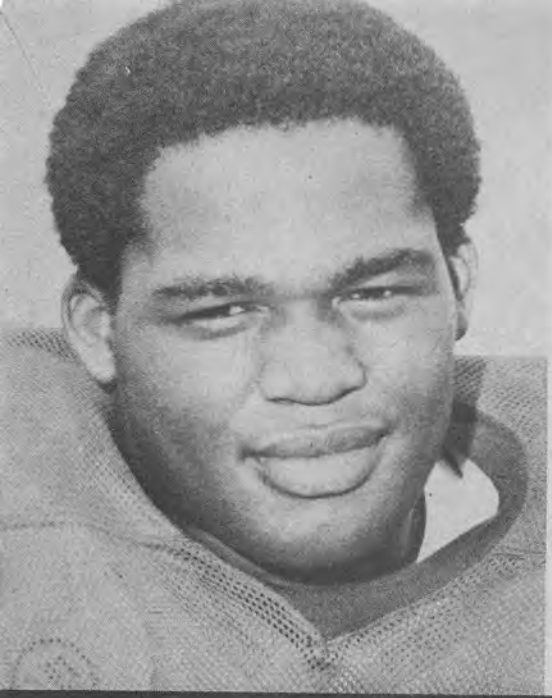
CLIFF BRANCH
OAKLAND RAIDERS
Born, Houston, Tex. Aug. 1, 1948; Lives, Oakland, Calif.; Colorado: WR; Ht. 5-11; Wt. 170.

In his junior college days at Wharton Community College in Texas, Cliff Branch was a world class sprinter and he hasn't lost a step in the NFL. He still performs occasionally in pro track and holds the pro record of 4.3 seconds for the 40-yard dash.

Cliff harnessed that blazing speed to become one of the league's top pass receivers. He has made the Pro Bowl the last two seasons. His 1975 credentials include 51 catches for 893 yards and nine touchdowns, fourth in the NFL in yardage.

Since Branch became a starter he has caught at least one pass in 32 consecutive games, including 28 regular season and four post season contests. He also caught passes in both of his Pro Bowl appearances. His top mark was seven catches for 155 yards and three TDs against Atlanta last Nov. 30. He also grabbed seven for 132 at Baltimore and six for 55 at Kansas City.

At Colorado where he became a member of the state's Hall of Fame, he ran back kicks in addition to his receiving work. After one year of kick returns (1972) he has concentrated on his catching at Oakland.



JIM BRAXTON
BUFFALO BILLS
Born, Vanderbilt, Pa. May 23, 1949; Lives, Charleston, W. Va.; West Virginia; RB1 Ht. 6-1; Wt. 242.

During Jim Braxton's first five years at Buffalo he had to play second fiddle to O.J. Simpson. With O.J. toting the mail, Braxton was billed as the "other back." Actually he and O.J. made a perfect team with awesome power. However Braxton will be forced to watch his glamorous teammate from the sidelines this season due to torn ligaments suffered in the Bills first game.

Braxton is coming off his best year in 1975 when he rushed for 823 yards and scored nine touchdowns while averaging 4.4 yards per carry. He also has developed into a capable receiver with 26 catches for 282 yards and four TDs last season. Braxton really put on a show last Thanksgiving Day when the snow-bound Bills finally arrived in St. Louis. Braxton scored three touchdowns against the Cards while carrying 34 times for 165 yards.

A strong blocker, solid power runner and sure-handed receiver, Braxton has accounted for 2,387 rushing yards and 927 receiving yards for a total of 27 TDs during his first five years in Buffalo.

One of nine children, Braxton works with the West Virginia Governor's Manpower Office in the winter, speaking to groups of young people. He and his wife and two children live in Charleston, W. Va.

JOHN BROCKINGTON
GREEN BAY PACKERS
Born, Sept. 7, 1948, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Lives LaJolla, Calif.; Ohio State; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 225.

This is the year Jarring John Brockington has to prove himself once more.

After four outstanding seasons since the Packers drafted him No. 1 in 1971, the former Ohio State All-American via Brooklyn, N.Y., slumped to a medicore 434 yards rushing last year. He also bagged 33 passes for 242 yards.

But this made it two straight years that Brockington had dipped below the 1,000 yard mark in rushing. He set a league record when he ran for 1,000 yards or more in each of his first three seasons (1,105, 1,027, and 1,144). He racked up 883 yards in 1974 when he also caught 43 passes for 314 yards.

He is also a first-rate blocker, both on running plays and in the pass protection department. He has been picked for the Pro Bowl team three times.

KEN BURROUGH
HOUSTON OILERS
Born, Jacksonville, Fla., June 14, 1948; Lives, Houston: Texas, Southern; WR; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 210.

Double Zero, so called from his uniform number of "00", is coming off his greatest year when he caught 53 passes for a league-leading total of 1,063 yards and eight touchdowns. Ken was the only receiver in the NFL to catch passes for over 1,000 yards.

It was a long time coming but Burrough finally earned Pro Bowl recognition and responded by catching a 64-yard TD pass from AFC teammate Dan Pastorini.

The opposition usually gives Burrough double coverage because of his great speed, outstanding moves, good hands and size. Most clubs find it impossible to cover his one-on-one.

The former Texas Southern star originally was drafted by New Orleans in 1970 but was traded to Houston in 1971. In his early days he also was used as a kick return specialist. In his first six years in the league he caught 196 passes for 3,219 yards and 19 TDs.

RICHARD CASTER
NEW YORK JETS
Born, Mobile, Ala., Oct. 16, 1948; Lives, Hempstead, N.Y.; Jackson State; TE; Ht. 6-5; Wt. 228.

Richard Caster probably is the most feared tight end in the NFL. He has an uncanny ability to get loose deep and the size (6-5) to take full advantage of his speed and quickness. Originally a wide receiver when he came up from Jackson State as a No. 2 draft in 1970, Caster was moved by then coach Weeb Ewbank to tight end in 1972 in an inspired switch.

With Jerome Barkum, a Jackson State teammate, on the outside and Caster breaking loose downfield from tight end, the Jets present Joe Namath with two speedy targets.

Jet record books show the longest pass in the club history was a 91-yarder from Namath to Caster against Baltimore in 1975 but it didn't produce a touchdown. The longest scoring pass was 89 yards against Miami in 1974, also caught by Caster.

Caster topped all NFL tight ends in yardage with 820 last season and led AFC tight ends with 47 catches for a 17.4-yard average. He made the Pro Bowl team for the third year.

Born in Mobile, Alabama, Caster now lives in Hempstead, N.Y. and spends a great deal of his time making appearances for the Jets and helping young people.

WALLY CHAMBERS
CHICAGO BEARS
Born, May 15, 1951, Phoenix City, Ala.; Lives, Chicago; Eastern Kentucky; DT; Ht. 6-6; Wt. 260.

Wally Chambers wears a dime-sized ring he received as a gift in his pierced left ear. Don't let that fool you. The Bears' huge defensive tackle comes in on runners like gangbusters.

The 6-6, 260-pounder from Eastern Kentucky was NFC defensive Rookie of the Year in 1973 and that was just for starters. He keeps improving each year and was picked for the NFL All-Star team and the Pro Bowl for the third time in two years.

A fast man for his size, clocking 4.8 seconds for 40 yards, Chambers had 12 sacks in his first seven games last season.

Highly touted during his college career, Chambers was the eighth pick in the 1973 draft, a high choice for a lineman. He has more than lived up to his billing. The Bears hope to build a contender around him.

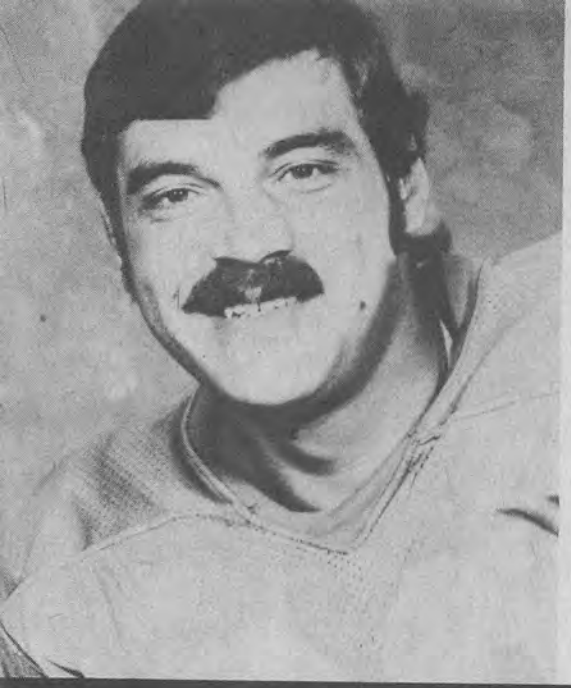
BOOBIE CLARK
CINCINNATI BENGALS
Born, Jacksonville, Fla., Nov. 8, 1950; Lives, Jacksonville, Fla.; Bethune-Cookman; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 245.

When Boobie Clark first flashed across the horizon in 1973, a 12th round draft choice from Bethune-Cookman, he looked like a sure thing for stardom. Unfortunately for Boobie, and the Bengals, he never has approached that rookie season of 988 yards and eight touchdowns.

Injuries have cut down on Clark's production, forcing him to miss most of the 1974 season. When he got back to work on full-time duty last fall he found the Cincinnati offense had become pass-oriented. As a result he carried but 167 times and yet led the club with 594 yards.

This condition has produced an unhappy Boobie who has talked of playing out his option and moving on to some other club where he can be a runner and "not a pass receiver." The Bengals did use Clark as a receiver quite often, throwing 42 passes to him. However, they did the same thing in 1973 when he caught 45.

A tight end and linebacker at Bethune-Cookman, Clark has been running out of the fullback position during most of his Cincinnati career.



LARRY CSONKA
NEW YORK GIANTS
Born, Dec. 25, 1946, Stow, Ohio; Lives, Lisbon, Ohio; Syracuse; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 237.

Larry Csonka returns to the National Football League as a millionaire and with a strong desire to show the fans he can still run with the best in pro football.

The former Syracuse All-American and ex-All Pro of the Miami Dolphins reportedly picked up around a $1 million to play for Memphis in the World Football League in 1975. At the end of the season, the WFL became defunct and Csonka became a free agent.

The Giants, usually a tight-fisted outfit, surprised by signing the hard-running back for another big bundle.

In seven seasons with Miami, Csonka rushed for 5,900 yards in 1,286 carries, a 4.6 average and 41 touchdowns. With the Dolphins Larry rushed for a 1,000 or more yards three straight years (1971-1973), starred in three Super Bowls, won All-NFL honors five times, played in the Pro Bowl five times and won about everything that he was eligible for.

He was the MVP in the 1974 24-7 Dolphin triumph over the Vikings in the Super Bowl. He rushed for 145 yards.

CURLEY CULP
HOUSTON OILERS
Born, Yuma, Ariz., Oct. 10, 1946; Lives, Houston; Arizona State; MG; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 265.

Curley Culp is the Oilers good luck charm. Since he joined the Houston club midway in the 1974 season they have won 16 and lost only six.

Under Coach "Bum" Phillips' three-man line defense, Curley pulls it all together as the middle man or "middle guard" as the Oilers' terminology goes. Culp led the club in quarterback sacks last year with 11½ (players often share the same sack) and was named the NFL Defensive Player of the Year by NEA. He also was picked for the Pro Bowl. He may be the strongest middle guard in football.

Houston acquired Culp from Kansas City in a trade for the embattled defensive tackle John Matuszak and a future Oiler draft choice. Before coming to Houston, Curley was a standout for the Chiefs in their Super Bowl win over Minnesota.

Culp was a two-sport man at Houston, All-American in football and NCAA heavyweight wrestling champ in 1968. He passed up an Olympic team berth to turn pro when Denver drafted him in 1968.

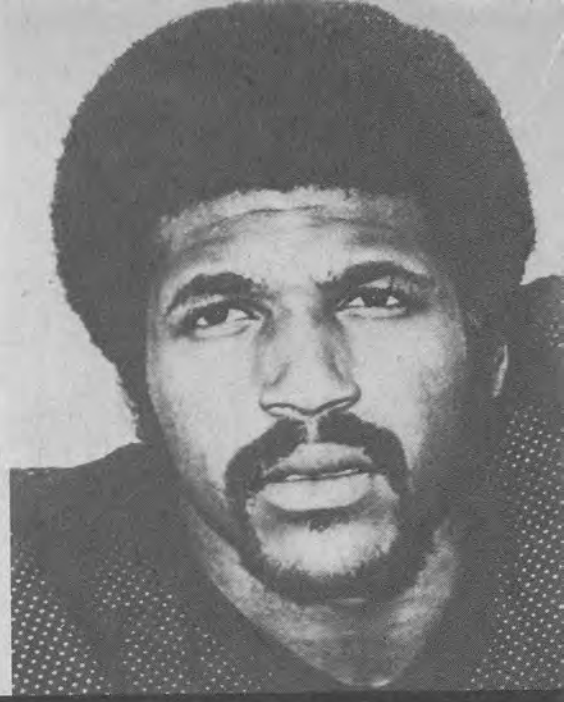
SAM CUNNINGHAM
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
Born Santa Barbara, Calif., Aug. 15, 1950; Lives, Long Beach, Calif.; Southern California; RB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 224.

When the Patriots need vital yardage they give the ball to Sam (the Bam) Cunningham. It usually works. Despite a series of injuries that have interrupted his career, Cunningham has gained 1,993 yards in his first three years in the NFL, an average of 4.1 per carry.

The nation became aware of "Sam the Bam" in the Rose Bowl game between Southern California and Ohio State. Sam had been a sophomore whiz but suffered a knee injury and had been used as a blocker in his final college year. Against Ohio State they turned him loose and he wound up with four TDs.

Cunningham led the Pats in rushing with 516 yards as a rookie and was on the way to a sensational second year in 1974 when he broke a leg and had to stop after getting 810 yards in 10 games.

Perhaps the fastest man in the league for the first 10 yards, Cunningham is also a crunching blocker and capable pass receiver. His speciality is the short yardage burst and the daring dive for second effort yardage.



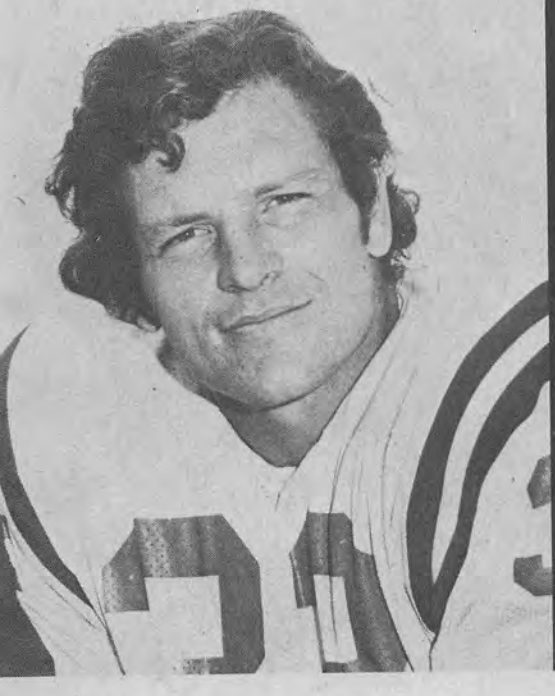
ISAAC CURTIS
CINCINNATI BENGALS
Born, Santa Ana, Calif. Oct. 20, 1950; Lives, Marina Del Rey, Calif.; San Diego State; WR; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 193.

The Ken Anderson-Isaac Curtis combination is one of The Most exciting pass-catch teams in professional football. They are so good that even conservative Paul Brown had gone pass happy before he stepped down to hand over the controls to Bill Johnson this season.

The air strike is the mark of the Bengals and Curtis is the man who races downfield to catch 44 for 934 yards, an average of 21.2 yards, the best in the NFL. Isaac is one of the fastest men in the league, a sure-handed receiver and most dependable in clutch situations. His smooth, fluid moves have put him in the Pro Bowl for the last three seasons.

Cincinnati used its No. 1 draft choice to grab Curtis out of San Diego State in 1973, the year Don Coryell left San Diego State to become coach of the Cardinals.

In his first three years in the NFL, Curtis has caught 122 passes for 2,410 yards and 26 TDs. The Bengals also use him on the end around reverse six or eight times a year.



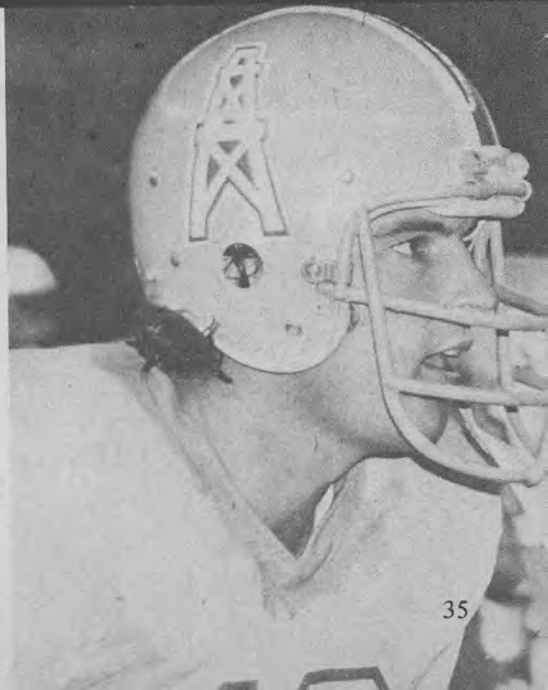
MIKE CURTIS
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
Born, Rockville, Md. March 27, 1944; Lives, Baltimore; Duke; MLB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 232.

A fierce competitor, Mike Curtis should set a fine example for the defensive unit of the new Seattle Seahawks.

The famed middle linebacker, one of the mainstays of the great Baltimore defense in ITC championship heyday, didn't see eye to eye with Baltimore GM Joe Thomas and wanted to be traded. Seattle grabbed him in the expansion draft.

Even at 32 and in his 12th pro season, Curtis should furnish the Seahawks with explosive defensive power. Mike loves to charge and hit. He has an instinct for the ball and is noted for his interceptions.

He was the MVP in the Colts' Super Bowl V victory over Dallas.



LYNN DICKEY
GREEN BAY PACKERS
Born Oct. 19, 1949, Paola, Kans.; Lives Houston; Kansas State; QB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 210.

Lynn Dickey got his chance for a starting quarterback job when he was traded by Houston to the Green Bay Packers for veteran quarterback John Hadl in April.

Dickey, who had been an understudy at Houston to Dan Pastorini, came to the Pack on the strong recommendation of Lew Carpenter, an ex-Houston aide who now is the Packers' passing game coach.

A high percentage thrower, Dickey lost out to Pastorini, a flashy, bomb-throwing passer at Houston. At that Dickey considered himself lucky to play at any time. He was out 15 months after suffering a dislocated hip in an exhibition game in the 1972 season.

He is considered cool under fire and shows a 52.7 percentage on his passes. He was the greatest passing quarterback in Big Eight history when he was at Kansas State (1968-70).

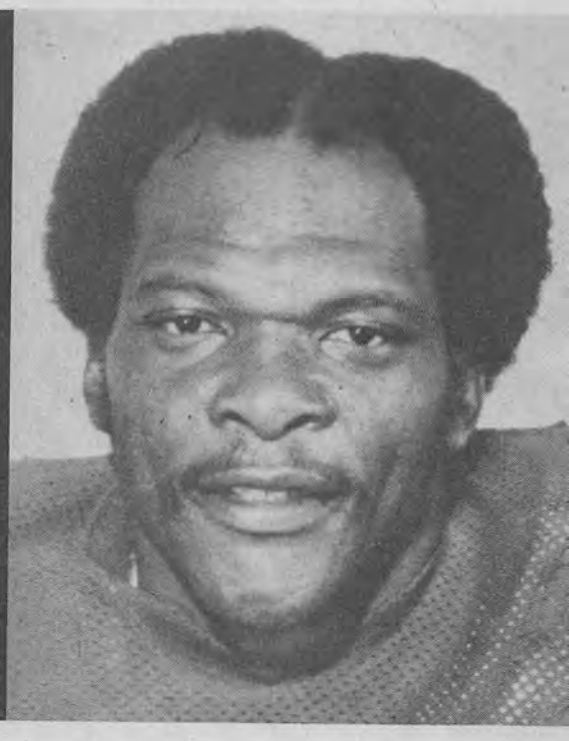
JOHN DUTTON
BALTIMORE COLTS
Born, Rapid City, S.D., Feb. 6, 1951; Lives, Lincoln, Neb.; Nebraska; DE; Ht. 6-7; Wt. 268.

Back home in Rapid City, S.D. where John Dutton went to high school, they remember him most as a basketball ace who attracted a flood of scholarship offers. He opted for football instead and wound up at Nebraska.

Around the NFL they remember Dutton most for the way he takes off after the quarterback from his defensive end position. They call the Colts' defensive line "The Sack Pack" because they specialize in the art of dumping the passer before he can get rid of the football. Last year they led the NFL with 59 QB sacks and the man who led the Sack Pack was John Dutton with 17 of the 59.

Drafted No. 1 in 1974 Dutton moved right into the starting lineup and gained solid support in the Rookie of the Year polls. After increasing his weight from 252 to 268 points he had an even better year as a sophomore in the big show. Despite an injury that forced him to miss much of the preseason activity in 1976, Dutton is very much the big man of that fearsome front four. He was second on the Colts team in 1975 with 73 primary tackles, recovered one fumble and was awarded a game ball after the Kansas City game in which he was credited with three QB sacks.

John and his wife, Ginny, Live in Lincoln, Neb. in the offseason, not too far from his old haunts in South Dakota.



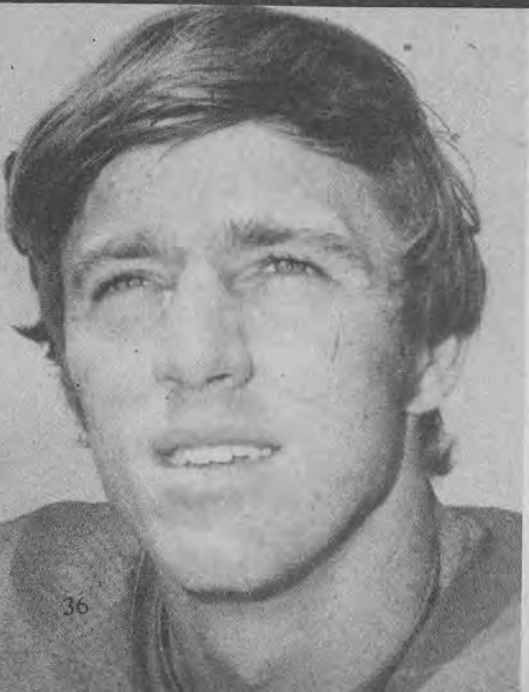
CARL ELLER
MINNESOTA VIKINGS
Born, Feb. 25, 1942, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Lives, Minneapolis; Minnesota; DE; Ht. 6-6; Wt. 250.

There's no doubt that Carl Eller has slowed up a bit after 12 years of jarring play in the National Football League. But the All-NFC defensive end of the Minnesota Vikings yields to virtually no one consistently in the battle pits of NFL competition.

A Pro Bowler six times, Eller built up his stamina for the pro game by playing two ways for the University of Minnesota. He was a starter at offensive and defensive tackles for the Golden Gophers.

In his 12th pro season, Carl was credited with 13 quarterback sacks, 70 tackles and 20 assists. He recovered two fumbles and caused three.

He is interested in movie making and has appeared in several films. He recently opened a liquor store and has plans for a restaurant.



JOE FERGUSON
BUFFALO BILLS
Born, Alvin, Tex., April 23, 1950; Lives, Shreveport, La.; Arkansas; QB; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 185.

While O.J. Simpson was grabbing all the headlines, it almost seemed as if Buffalo played without a quarterback. But they do have a QB who can do the job if given a chance to throw the ball. Actually, Ferguson was one of the most efficient passers in the NFL last season, throwing for 25 touchdowns, a figure matched only by Fran Tarkenton.

Ferguson's statistics show a constant improvement curve since he joined the Bills in 1973 as a third-round draftee from Arkansas. Coach Lou Saban only let him throw the ball 164 times as a rookie but he opened up more in 1974 with 232 throws and 12 TDs. Last year they took the chains off his arm and he wound up with 321 passes, 2,426 yards and the 25 TDs. He isn't a bad runner either, gaining 340 yards and scoring 5 TDs in his first three years.

Physical Ed major at Arkansas, Ferguson hopes to be a coach in the future. In the last two offseasons he has worked as an assistant at Northwestern Louisiana State. Ferguson comes from the same neck of the woods as Terry Bradshaw of the Steelers, James Harris of the Rams and Bert Jones of the Colts.

CHUCK FOREMAN
MINNESOTA VIKINGS
Born, Oct. 26, 1950, Frederick, Md.; Lives, Miami, Fla.; Miami, (Fla.) U.; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 207.

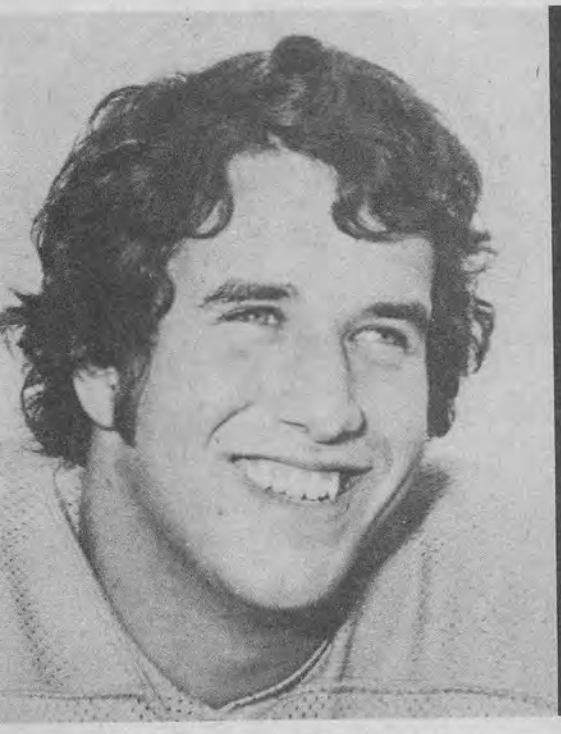
The Vikings count on Chuck Foreman to get the points whether on the ground or via the aerial route.

The versatile Minnesota running back ran for 13 touchdowns and 1,070 yards and grabbed 73 passes for nine touchdowns and 691 yards in 1975. That was no upset because he's been doing that sort of thing since he came into the NFL in 1973.

He led the NFL in pass receiving with his 73 and was second in scoring with 132 points. His 22 touchdowns were second in the NFL to O.J. Simpson's 23 but first in the NFC.

Chuck's 280 rushes and yardage (1,070) set club records along with his touchdowns, pass receiptions and most 100-yard rushing games (five).

This all added up to another super season for the All-Pro and Pro Bowl pick of three straight years.



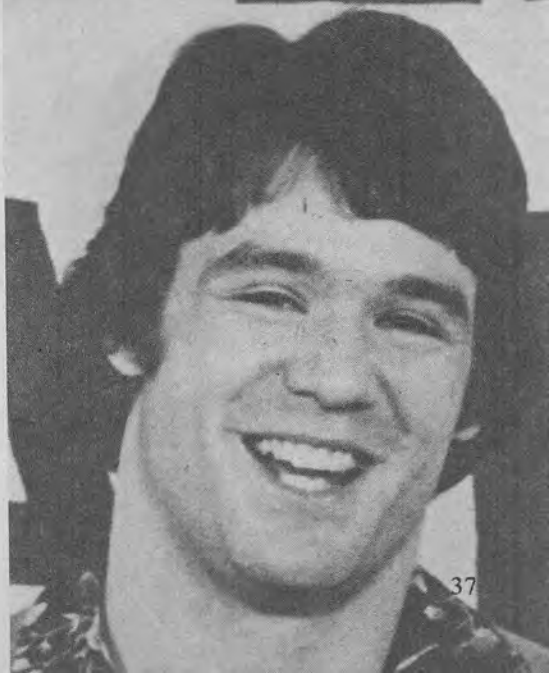
DAN FOUTS
SAN DIEGO CHARGES
Born, San Francisco, Calif., June 10, 1951; Lives, La Jolla, Calif.; Oregon; QB1; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 204.

If Bill Walsh, the Chargers' new offensive coordinator, can do the same thing for Dan Fouts that he did for Ken Anderson in Cincinnati, this could be the year for Fouts to blossom out as a top flight quarterback.

Despite minor injuries, Dan started nine Charger games in 1975 and completed 54.4 percent of his passes for 1,396 yards. His "biggie" was a 25-for-42 job for 329 yards against New England.

The Chargers drafted Fouts No. 3 out of Oregon in 1973 after he set school game, season, career passing and total offense records. He threw 37 TD passes and completed 482 for 5,995 yards in three years.

Dan is the son of Bob Fouts, a radio and TV sports announcer in the California area. When he isn't busy with a football, Dan works for WABC Radio in San Diego.



RUSS FRANCIS
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
Born, Seattle, Wash., April 3, 1953; Lives, Dexter, Ore.; Oregon; TE; Ht. 6-6; Wt. 240.

Russ Francis flies his own plane, wrestles professionally, throws the javelin in Olympic style, pitches well enough to be drafted by the Kansas City Royals and—oh yes—plays tight end for the Patriots.

Francis was born at Seattle, Wash. but his father, a wrestler and wrestling promoter, moved to Hawaii when Russ was a kid. He attended schools in Honolulu and moved to Dexter, Oregon in his senior year of high school with a budding rep as an all around sports star.

In Oregon he was throwing the discus 259 ft-9 inches, playing QB on the football team and winning all-state honors in basketball. He went on to Oregon where he concentrated—more or less—on football at tight end but left school and sat out the 1974 season before he was drafted No. 1 by the Patriots.

Francis made most of the rookie all-star teams in the NFL, catching 35 passes for 636 yards and four touchdowns. He is a big strong man who can run with the ball after he makes the catch. The Patriots fully expect him to be All-Pro for many years.

ROCKNE FREITAS
DETROIT LIONS
Born, Sept. 7, 1945, Kaikua, Hawaii; Lives, Honolulu; Oregon State; OT; Ht. 6-6; Wt. 275.

Yep, Rockne Freitas is the name although he's called Rock or Rocky by teammates and friends. He was named by his father who was an admirer of the famed coach, Knute Rockne, of Notre Dame.

A giant of a man and the strongest guy on the Lions' squad, he has been a fixture at offensive right tackle since taking over in the last game of the 1968 season. He has started 99 straight games at the position through the 1975 season.

The Hawaiian native played his college ball at Oregon State. He was drafted by Pittsburgh and joined the Lions when cut by the Steelers. He is impressive on pass blocking and charges powerfully on running plays.

His hobbies are skin-diving and weight-lifting. He can bench press 475 pounds. He was married recently to the women's paddle-ball champion of Hawaii, Leinaala Lundberg. The couple lives in Honolulu.

JOHN GILLIAM
ATLANTA FALCONS
Born, Aug. 7, 1945, Greenwood, S.C.; Lives, Atlanta; South Carolina State; WR; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 187.

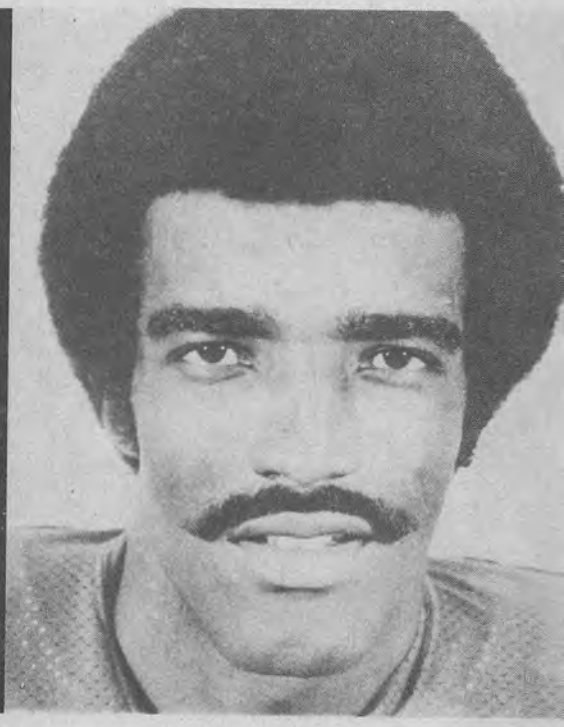
The Atlanta Falcons added a deep threat to their attack when they signed nine-year veteran John Gilliam in May.

Gilliam, one of Fran Tarkenton's favorite receivers, played out his option with Minnesota and then signed on with the Falcons. Gilliam owns a fashionable shoe store in downtown Atlanta and resides in the city in the off-season.

The speedy, elusive receiver caught 50 passes for 777 yards and seven touchdowns last year. This placed him 5th in the NFC and 10th overall in the NFL.

Gilliam came up with New Orleans in 1967, went to St. Louis in 1969 and then on to the Vikings in 1972. In '69, he grabbed 52 passes for 997 yards and nine touchdowns. He had another great season in 1972, his first with the Vikings. He bagged 47 throws for 1,035 yards and seven touchdowns.

He starred in track and football at South Carolina State.



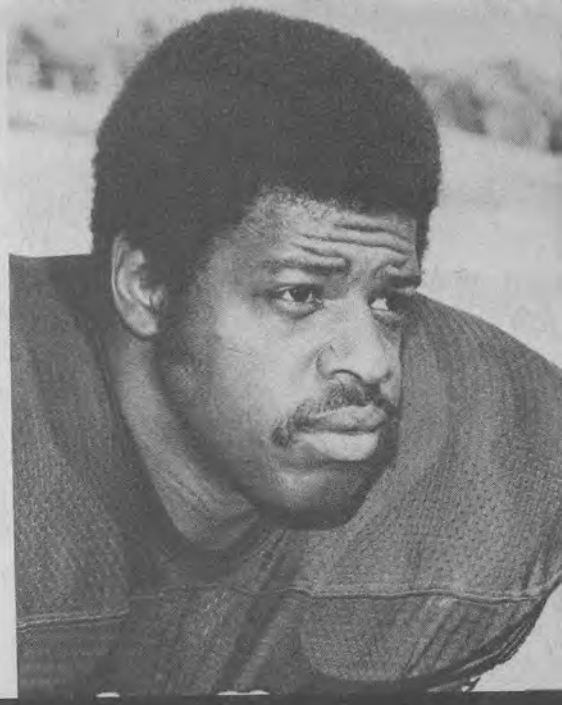
MEL GRAY
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS
Born, Sept. 28, 1946, Fresno, Calif; Lives, St. Louis; Missouri; WR; Ht. 5-9; Wt. 175.

One of the fastest runners in the NFL, Mel Gray has become one of the most feared receivers in pro football.

The 5-9, 175-pound speedster from Missouri, once timed in 9.2 for 100 yards, had his best of five pro seasons last year. He was one of the big reasons for the St. Louis Cards' conquest of the Eastern Division.

Mel bagged 48 passes for 926 yards, 11 touchdowns and a 19.3 yard average. That earned him All-NFL honors. He caught an eight-yard TD pass with 1:09 left to give the NFC a 23-20 win in the Pro Bowl.

The Giants hate the sight of him. Of his 28 career touchdowns, 10 have come against the Giants. In addition to being a deep TD threat, Mel also is a tough downfield blocker.

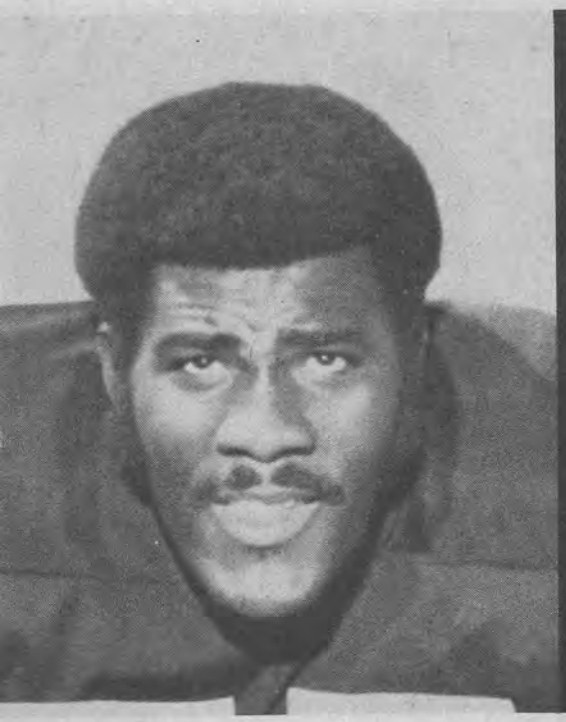


WOODY GREEN
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
Born, Warren, Ark., June 20, 1951; Lives, Portland, Ore.; Arizona State; RB; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 205.

If Woody Green can stay healthy for an entire season the NFL may finally see the whiz who was a two-time All American at Arizona State where he scored 33 TDs and gained 3,806 yards in three varsity seasons.

Woody was drafted No. 1 by the Chiefs in 1974 and was in and out of the lineup due to an old collarbone injury that flared during the preseason. Despite the interruptions he wound up with 509 yards rushing and 247 as a receiver.

Although Green did miss two games last season, he contributed 1,169 yards to total offense while rushing for 611 and 5 TDs, catching 23 passes for 215 yards and 1 TD and returning 16 kickoffs for 343 yards. Included in the rushing totals were two 100-yard days—101 vs. Oakland and 135 vs. Detroit.



JOE GREENE
PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Born, Temple, Tex., Dec. 24, 1946; Lives, Duncanville, Tex.; North Texas State; DT; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 275.

A pinched nerve in the left shoulder left "mean" Joe Greene a part time palyer in Super Bowl X and in the early stages of the 1976 season. The leader of the Steeler defense has spent a frustrating off season.

Trouble began for Joe with a freak knee sprain in a warmup prior to the New Orleans pre-season game in 1975. Then he suffered a groin pull in the first Cincinnati game, ending his consecutive game streak at 91. The pinched nerve in the second Houston game ruined Greene's year.

Although he often sat on the sidelines while Steve Furness played his position, Greene was able to provide inspirational leadership during the game and in the dressing room.

Despite the missed time he was All-Pro on practically every team and played in his seventh straight Pro Bowl game. He has been a consensus All-NFL since 1971 and All-AFC since 1970. Joe was the very first player drafted by Coach Chuck Noll when he became the head of the Steelers and started his championship building program.

Joe and his wife, Agnes, and two sons, Charles and Edward, and one daughter, Jo Quel, spend the off-season in the Dallas suburb of Duncanville, Texas. He makes several appearances as a speaker.

L.C. GREENWOOD
PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Born, Canton, Miss., Sept. 8, 1946; Lives, Pittsburgh; Arkansas AM&N, DE; Ht. 6-6; Wt. 245.

The big games seem to bring out the best in L.C. Greenwood, considered by many to be the best defensive end in the NFL. Although he played on two bad ankles most of 1975 he never missed a game and wound up on most of the All-Star teams.

Steeler fans remember one big "hit" that L.C. made on Baltimore's Lydell Mitchell that provided an inspirational lift with the Steelers trailing in the Divisional Playoff game. In Super Bowl IX he batted down three Minnesota passes and in Super Bowl X he sacked quarterback Roger Staubach three times.

Exceptionally quick for a big man, L.C.'s height and long arms prove most effective in pass defense. The quarterback often can't find the receivers behind L.C.

L.C. went to college on an academic scholarship and taught school during the off-seasons earlier in his career. He does volunteer work with the National Alliance of Business.

BOB GRIESE
MIAMI DOLPHINS
Born, Evansville, Ind., Feb. 3, 1945; Lives, Coral Gables, Fla.; Purdue; QB; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 190.

"There are some quarterbacks who throw bombs but can't throw first downs. I like Bob Griese, he throws first downs and bombs." That's how Coach Don Shula looks at his No. 1 quarterback, who knows how to mix the plays, read the defense and blend a fine running game with his passing attack.

Griese and the Dolphins ran into tough luck in 1975. He had led Miami to a two-game lead in the AFC East and had completed 61.8 percent of his passes when he suffered torn tendons in his right foot during the 10th game. He underwent surgery on the long flexor tendon on the bottom of the big toe and was lost for the year while Earl Morrall and later Don Strock struggled unsuccessfully to hold off the Colts.

The former Purdue star knows his way around the business world. He has a B.S. in industrial management and has invested widely in real estate. Griese is the most sought-after Dolphin for speaking engagements and gives much of his time to charity.

Griese and his wife, Judi, live in Coral Gables, Fla. with their three sons, Scott, Jeff and Brian.

ARCHIE GRIFFIN
CINCINNATI BENGALS
Born, Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 24, 1954; Lives, Columbus; Ohio State; RB; Ht. 5-9; Wt. 189.

If Archie Griffin is too small to play with the big boys in the NFL, don't mention it around Cincinnati. Archie jumped into the lineup early in the training season and made his presence known as the Bengals tuned up for the season.

There were some dubious scouts who shied away from the only two-time Heisman Trophy winner because of his size. Cincinnati didn't hesitate and grabbed Griffin as its second first-round choice. Paul Brown doesn't make too many mistakes in the draft and this was not one.

During Griffin's stay at Ohio State, located in his home town of Columbus, Ohio, he set NCAA records by gaining 100 yards in 31 games and rushing for 5,177 yards. Among many outstanding accomplishments were rushing for 246 yards against Iowa in 1973, rushing for 1,695 yards in 1974 and playing in three Rose Bowl games.

Archie is manged by an older brother, James, who has set up a series of business contracts. Among other deals there will be Archie Griffin T-Shirts and even an Archie Griffin dart board.

STEVE GROGAN
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
Born, Ottawa, Kan., July 24, 1953; Lives, Ottawa, Kan.; Kansas State; QB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 200.

When Jim Plunkett went out with a shoulder separation in the exhibition season of 1975 the Patriots were in a panic situation. They tried Neil Graff and took a look at rookie Steve Grogan while waiting for Plunkett to return in October. Another Plunkett injury brought Gorgan, a fifth-round draft choice, to the fore.

Relieving Plunkett against the 49ers, Grogan threw two touchdown passes and guided the Patriots to a 24-16 victory. The No. 1 job was his the rest of the way, except for one Plunkett start against Dallas.

A young man with a name like Grogan is bound to be appreicated in the Boston area. How could he miss? At the end of the season Grogan had thrown 11 TD passes, completed 50.9 percent of his passes and even rushed for 110 yards.

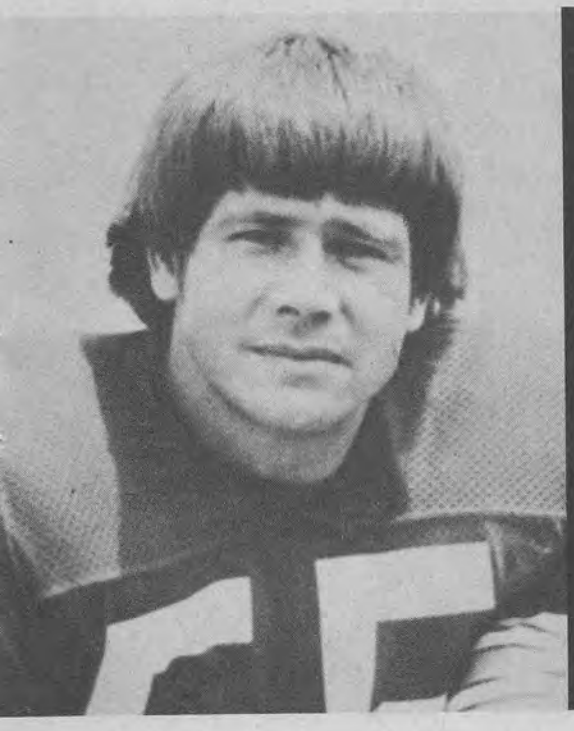
Plunkett's departure was assured. When Jim went west to the 49ers during the winter, Grogan was established as THE QB. The personable young man from Ottawa, Kansas figures in the Patriots' plans for years to come, if he can overcome the habit of throwing interceptions.

DAVE HAMPTON
ATLANTA FALCONS
Born, May 7, 1947, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Lives, Atlanta; Wyoming; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 202.

It took him seven seasons to join the 1,000-yard club and now Dave Hampton wants to become a steady member of the elite set. Sometimes the difference between making it and not making it can be only three or five yards. Making that extra yardage, however, can add up to plenty of cash.

Hampton, out of Wyoming, had three seasons with Green Bay before coming to Atlanta. He rushed for 1,002 yards and five touchdowns in 250 carries last season. He averaged 4.0 yards per rush with his longest gain 22 yards.

In 1972 he piled up 995 yards and in 1973 he upped that to 997. Injuries stopped him (454) in 1974 but the opposition couldn't hold him back in 1975, especially with a passing threat in Steve Bartkowski. He was in great demand for personal appearances during the off-season.



CHRIS HANBURGER, JR.
WASHINGTON REDSKINS
Born, Aug. 13, 1941, Ft. Bragg, N.C.; Lives, Upper Marlboro, Md.; North Carolina; LB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 218.

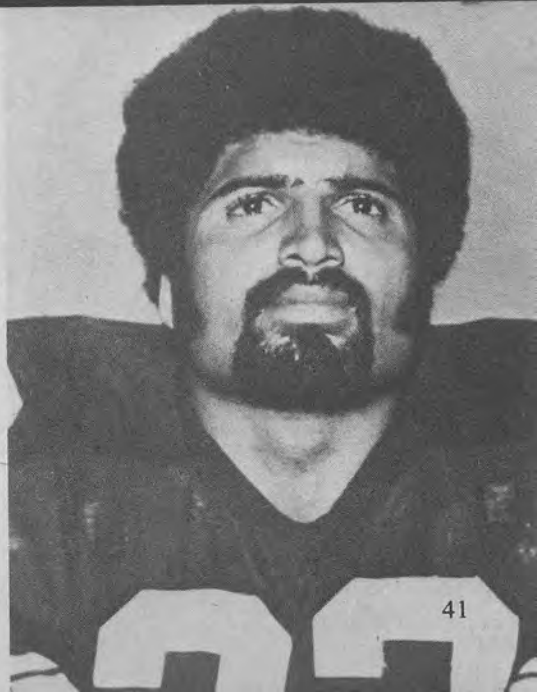
Chris Hanburger heads into his 12th pro season still rated All-Pro among the NFL's linebackers.

The right side linebacker was picked again for the Pro Bowl last year, making it four years straight and eight in his 11 years with the Washington Redskins. Not bad for a guy drafted 18th in 1964!

He is known for making "the big play." He had three interceptions in 1975, four in '74 and four in '72. It was in 1972 that he was a unanimous pick as NFC Defensive Player of the Year. There's not much of a difference between the caliber of his play then and now.

Chris is a hard hitter, forcing many fumbles.

"We've run plays designed to take Hanburger away from the ball," says Dallas quarterback Roger Staubach, "and he still comes in to tackle the runners for a loss. His instincts are unbelievable."



FRANCO HARRIS
PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Born, Fort Dix, N.J., March 7, 1950; Lives, Pittsburgh; Penn State; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 230.

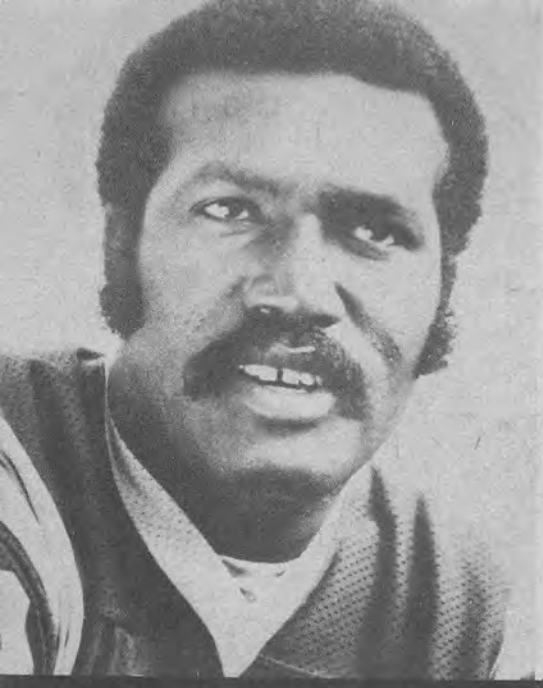
Franco's Army cheered all year in 1975 when the former Penn State star slid through and over enemy defenses for a career high of 1,246 yards and 10 touchdowns. He also caught 28 passes for 214 additional yards and one more TD.

Harris thus became the fourth player in pro football history to rush for 4,000 yards in his first four seasons. He has been over the 1,000-mark in three of those four pro years. A Pro Bowler for four straight years, Harris also has been the leading rusher in eight of nine post-season games in which he played during that period.

The powerful runner can crash straight ahead, change gears and suddenly dart outside when an opening appears. He is strong enough to run over defenders when vital yardage is needed.

Harris set a single game Super Bowl record with 156 yards against Minnesota in SB IX when he also set a mark with 34 carries. His total of 61 rushing attempts in two games is a career SB record.

One of nine children, Harris lives in Pittsburgh. He was born at Fort Dix, N.J., son of an Army career man.



JAMES HARRIS
LOS ANGELES RAMS
Born, July 20, 1947, Monroe, La.; Lives, Los Angeles; Grambling; QB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 210.

Once waived out of the National Football League and apparently through with pro football, James Harris has fought back to become one of the top quarterbacks in the NFL.

In less than two full seasons as the No. 1 QB of the Rams, Harris has guided his team into two playoff berths. He became the No. 1 quarterback in 1974 when John Hadl was traded to Green Bay midway through the season. Since he's been the regular signal caller, the Rams have posted a 17-4 record in regular season play.

The former Grambling star was having a tremendous year when a bruised shoulder forced him to the sidelines for the 1975 playoffs.

He was Buffalo's No. 8 draft choice in 1969 but saw little action with the Bills for three seasons. They waived him and for a while Harris was out of pro football. The Rams signed him as a free agent for their reserve squad in 1972. He was moved up to the varsity the following year. He rated No. 2 in 1974 and No. 4 last year among the NFC's passers.

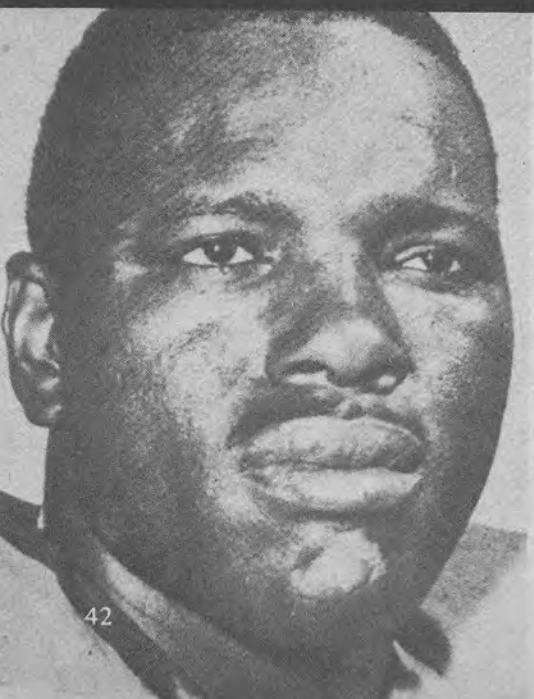
JIM HART
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS
Born, April 29, 1944, Evanston, Ill; Lives, St. Louis; Southern Illinois; QB; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 210.

When Don Coryell took over as head coach of the St. Louis Cardinals, he named veteran Jim Hart as his No. 1 quarterback. With that kind of backing, Hart has become one of the leading quarterbacks in the NFL.

He has had three fine seasons in a row, leading the Cards to the Eastern Division championship the last two. His last two seasons have been super.

In 1974 he completed 200 of 388 passes for 2,411 yards and 20 touchdowns. He had only eight interceptions. Last year he was intercepted 19 times but completed 182 of 345 for 2,507 yards and 19 touchdowns.

Hart headed into his 11th season as a pro with high hopes of leading the Cards all the way to the Super Bowl.



TOMMY HART
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
Born, Nov. 7, 1944, Macon, Ga.; Lives, Atherton, Calif.; Morris Brown; DE; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 251.

Tommy Lee Hart stands 6-4 and weighs 251 pounds. He is a defensive end, and a very good one, of the San Francisco 49ers.

Despite his size, Hart has been timed in 9.7 seconds for 100 yards, and 48 flat for 440 yards. He also was a shot-putter. So you take speed, strength and desire, put it in Tommy Hart's frame, and you have an idea what the opposition faces each weekend.

He is in his 9th N.L. season and his sixth as a starter. In those six seasons he has averaged 15 sacks and 76 solo tackles despite being double-teamed most of the time.

He was a two-way performer at Morris Brown, playing offensive guard and tackle and defensive tackle and end.

TED HENDRICKS
OAKLAND RAIDERS
Born, Guatemala City, Guat., Nov. 1, 1947; Lives Miami Lakes, Fla.; Miami; LB; Ht. 6-7; Wt. 220.

Ted Hendricks always has been a star. When he played at Miami in college he was known as "The Stork", the first sophomore to make All-America from that school. When he was drafted No. 2 by Baltimore in 1969 he quickly became a regular linebacker. It was the same story at Green Bay where he was given a fabulous high-salaried contract with a provision permitting him to leave after one year.

Hendricks shopped around as a free agent a year ago and finally settled on Oakland. The Raiders signed him but they already had three regular linebackers and Hendricks couldn't force his way in. Because Coach John Madden often uses the three-man line, four-linebacker defense, Hendricks found plenty of work as the extra linebacker.

When Gerald Irons was traded to Cleveland during the off-season, a regular job opened up for Hendricks who seldom misses a game. He was All-Pro four times with Baltimore and Green Bay and hopes to earn the same status with Oakland.

His size has helped him make 18 career interceptions. His agility has led to six fumble recoveries and two blocked punts result in two touchdowns and two safeties. He is a strong, sure tackler.

Hendricks was born in Guatemala but played his high school ball as an end at Hialeah, Fla. He now makes his off-season home at Miami Lakes.

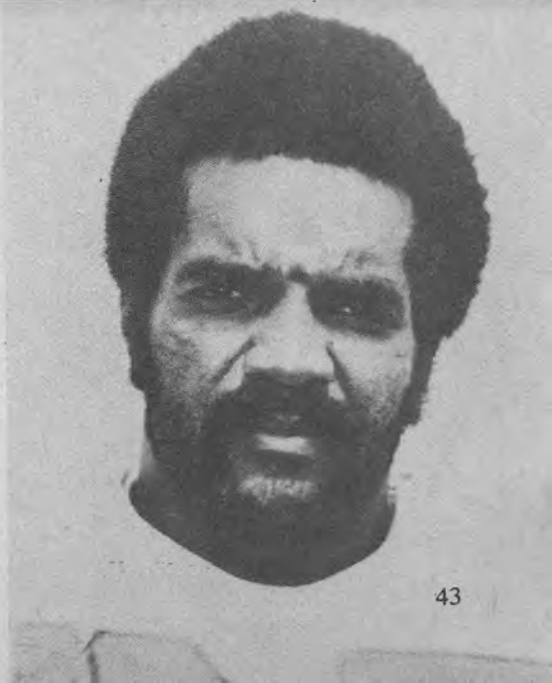
JOHN HICKS
NEW YORK GIANTS
Born, March 21, 1951; Lives, Johnstown, Ohio; Ohio State; OG; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 258.

In just two seasons of pro ball, burly John Hicks has earned himself a solid reputation as one of the best guards in the NFL.

The No. 1 draft pick of the Giants in 1974, Hicks more than lived up to expectations. He won Offensive Rookie of the Year honors and followed up with another outstanding season in 1975.

The All-American guard from Ohio State, is big, strong and agile. He excels in all phases of the game, pass blocking, leading the sweeps and in straight-ahead blocking. He played in all 14 games each season.

He is related to NFL players Tommy Hart and Frank and Elija Pitts. He is active in the Catholic Big Brothers program.



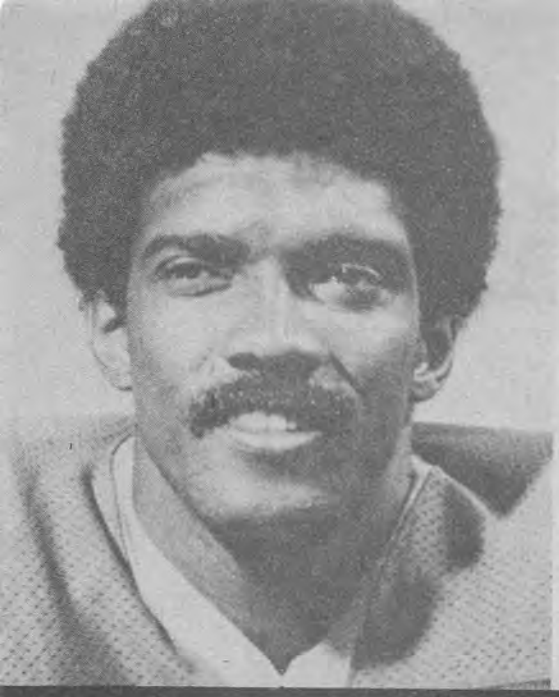
CALVIN HILL
WASHINGTON REDSKINS
Born, Jan. 2, 1947, Baltimore; Lives, Reston, Va.; Yale; RB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 227.

So Calvin Hill took the money from Hawaii in the World Football League and now he's back in the National Football League. The WFL is dead.

But times have changed in the NFL, too. The one-time Yale star had played six seasons with Dallas. But under the easing restrictions in pro football's player relations, Hill was able to sign with Washington as a free agent.

He found plenty of competition for the running back jobs.

In six seasons with Dallas, the Yale swifty had two 1,000 plus rushing seasons and a total of 5,009 yards. This averaged to 835 a season. He also averaged 23 pass receptions a season. A breakaway threat on the run or with a pass, Hill piled up 39 TDs rushing and six receiving with Dallas. In addition he also passed for three touchdowns.



HAROLD JACKSON
LOS ANGELES RAMS
Born, Jan. 6, 1946, Hattiesburg, Miss.; Lives Hattiesburg; Jackson State; WR; Ht. 5-10; Wt. 175.

Harold Jackson has played his last three seasons with the Los Angeles Rams, catching 113 passes for more than 2,000 yards and 25 touchdowns.

In those three seasons, the Rams have posted a 34-8 record and have won three consecutive NFC Western Division titles.

This sort of gives you an idea of the value of the swift wide receiver to the Rams. The Rams didn't recognize it once but they made up for it later.

As a rookie 12th round draft choice in 1968, Jackson, a 9.5 sprinter for 100 yards, didn't get much of a chance to catch a pass. He was traded to Philadelphia in 1969. Four years later, after Jackson had won All-NFL honors with his receiving, the Rams got him back in a trade for quarterback Roman Gabriel.

In 1969 and 1972 at Philadelphia he topped the NFL in receiving yardage (1,116 and 1,048). In his first year back in LA he had NFL highs of 13 TD catches and a 21.9 yard average per catch.

Last year he bagged 43 for 786 yards, 18.3 average and seven touchdowns. He has 46 touchdowns in all.

BILLY JOHNSON
HOUSTON OILERS
Born, Bouthwyn, Pa., Jan. 21, 1952; Lives, Houston; Widener; WR; Ht. 5-9; Wt. 170.

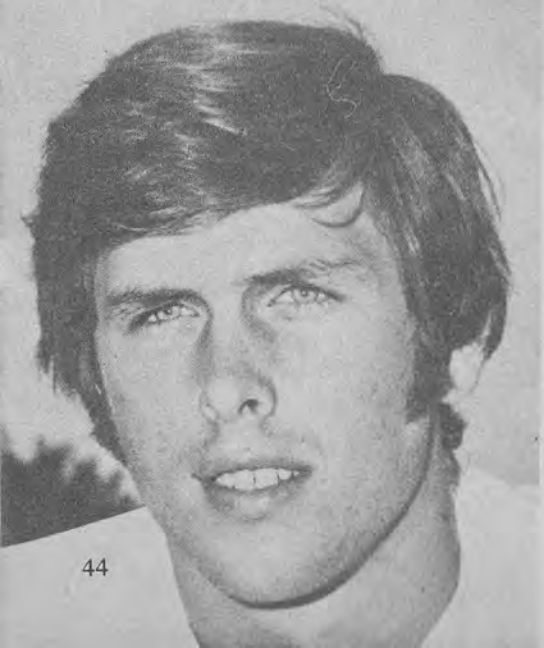
"Billy White Shoes" drives the opposition crazy. Punters try to kick the ball away from him. Kickoff men attempt to sky the ball into somebody else's territory. But they can't stop Billy Johnson.

The little man from Widener College, where he scored 45 touchdowns, keeps fans on their feet every time the ball is kicked his way.

Last year he tied the NFL record for TDs on kick returns with four (three on punts and one on a kickoff). He just missed setting a new mark by one yard when he was nailed on the 1-yard line by San Francisco after a 75-yard punt runback.

Billy J. has combined yardage of 3,484 on rushing, receiving, punt and kickoff returns for an average of 16.8 yards every time he touches the ball. He was named to the Pro Bowl team last year and won MVP honors by returning three kickoffs for 74 yards and a combined total offensive effort of 263 yards.

During the off-season Billy works in the Oilers' public relations department and does outstanding work with youngsters in the Houston area.



BERT JONES
BALTIMORE COLTS
Born, Ruston, La., Sept. 7, 1951; Lives, Ruston, La. LSU; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 212.

Bert Jones matured in 1975 into one of the best young quarterbacks in the NFL as he led the upstart Colts to the Eastern Division title in the AFC. The son of Dub Jones, former Cleveland Browns' great, threw 18 touchdown passes, completed 59 percent of his passes and had the lowest interception percentage in the league with only eight interceptions for a 2.3 percentage.

When Bert doesn't throw the ball he picks up and runs. While ambling for 321 yards last season he led all NFL QBs in rushing, although he played the second half of the season with broken ribs. Whatever chance the Colts had against the Steelers in their playoff game probably disappeared when Bert suffered a bruised right arm on the Colts' first possession in a game eventually won by the Super Bowl champs 28-10.

Born and raised in Ruston, La. where he operates a ranch in the off-season, Jones' hobbies include flying, scuba diving, hunting, fishing and skiing. Bert is single. He was a consensus All-American at LSU and has been groomed from boyhood for a pro football career.

ED "TOO TALL" JONES
DALLAS COWBOYS
Born, Feb. 23, 1951, Jackson, Tenn.; Lives, Jackson; Tennessee State; DE; Ht. 6-9; Wt. 265.

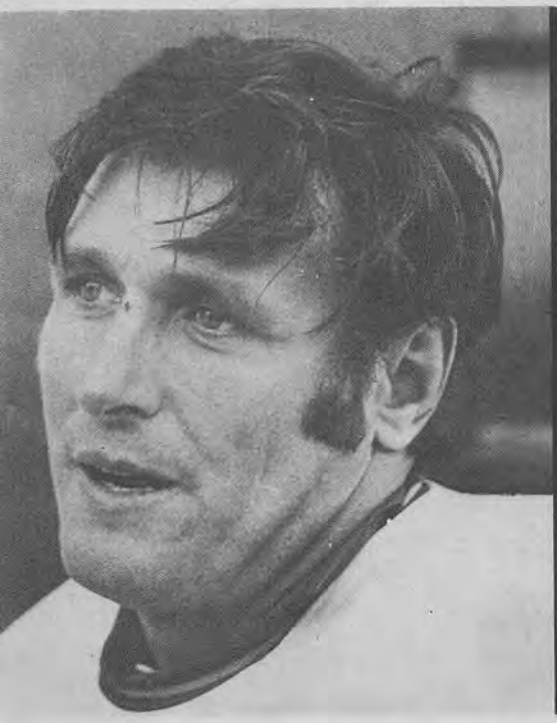
Ed Jones earned his nickname of "Too Tall' in his college days at Tennessee State. A teammate called him that because the other teams wouldn't try to pass on the side of the field that the 6-9 giant protected. "He's just too tall," they said.

That hasn't happened in the NFL yet but the opposition is plenty wary of the huge defensive end.

Jones was outstanding as a rookie in 1974 when he played on the right side of the line and charged ahead with great power. But last year he was moved to the left side, or strong side, and had problems adjusting.

"If he can make a surge toward his future potential, we are going to have a better defensive line this year," says coach Tom Landry.

In the off-season, "Too Tall" splits his time between Dallas and Jackson. He is the owner-manager of a booking-promotion agency handling musical groups.



BILL KILMER
WASHINGTON REDSKINS
Born, Sept. 5, 1939, Topeka, Kan.; Lives, Vienna, Va.; UCLA; QB; Ht. 6-0; Wt. 204.

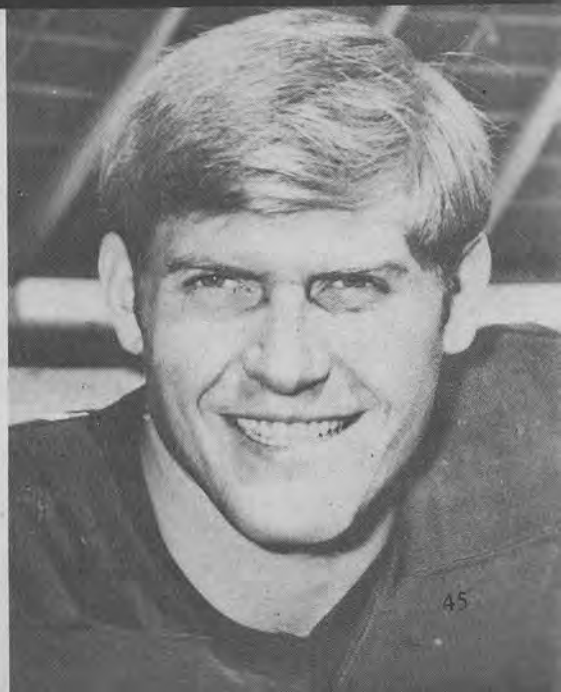
Bill Kilmer heads into his 15th season rated as one of the outstanding quarterbacks in the National Football League.

You wouldn't think so when you see him throw some of his wobbly passes. But he gets the job done. The Redskins got the former UCLA All-American in a trade with New Orleans in 1971. The Saints had acquired the quarterback from San Francisco in the 1967 expansion draft.

The Skins wanted Kilmer mainly as a backup for Sonny Jurgensen. But it was Kilmer who had a big hand in taking the Skins to the playoffs four straight years through 1974.

He is a resourceful leader, a tough clutch player, and dead game. His courage is legendary. He played most of the 1973 season in severe pain, got the Skins into the playoffs, and then had a serious abdominal operation shortly after the NFC title game. While playing with San Francisco he missed the entire 1963 season after almost being killed in a terrible auto crash.

Billy missed two games last year but he still threw 23 touchdown passes, a career high, and ranked third among NFC passers.



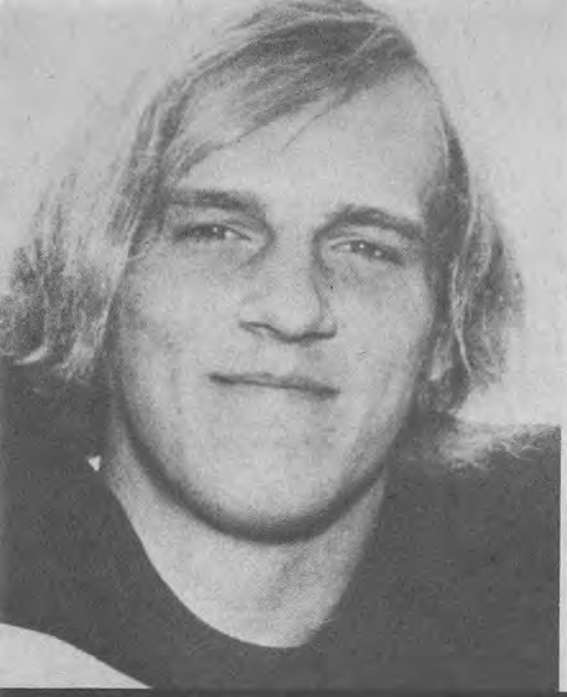
GEORGE KUNZ
BALTIMORE COLTS
Born, Fort Sheridan, Ill., July 5, 1947; Lives, Paradise Valley, Ariz.; Notre Dame; T; Ht. 6-6; Wt. 266.

The trade that brought George Kunz to Baltimore from Atlanta proved to be a key factor in the rousing rally that saw the Colts win their last nine games and the Eastern Division title in the AFC. In case you have forgotten, Kunz went to Baltimore in return for the Colts' No. 1 draft pick which the Falcons used to nab quarterback Steve Bartkowski.

Kunz was No. 1 himself when he came out of Notre Dame and joined the Falcons. Acknowledged as one of the very best offensive linemen in the NFL, he has been an All-Pro four times.

George is interested in the restaurant business and also raises Appaloosa horses on his ranch in Paradise Valley, Ariz. where he lives with his wife, Mary Sue, and their infant son, Matthew, during the off-season.

In his years at Notre Dame Kunz was a two-time consensus All-American and also earned Academic All-American honors. Captain of the Irish in his senior year, George was the second man drafted in 1969, the year when O.J. Simpson was No. 1.



JACK LAMBERT
PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Born, Mantua, Ohio, July 8, 1952; Lives, Pittsburgh; Kent State; MLB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 220.

Jack Lambert is the big, strong embattled Steeler who threw Cliff Harris to the ground after the Dallas cornerback "congratuled" the Steelers' Roy Gerela for missing a field goal.

"He did something he wasn't supposed to do," said Lambert. "The only thing I was sorry about was that I might have been thrown out of the game."

Lambert plays it rough and tough, like a middle linebacker should. In two short seasons he has emerged as the MLB of the future in the NFL and there are many who place him No. 1 right now. He has become a team leader with his emotional play and took up much of the slack left when Joe Greene, the usual defensive leader, was out of action due to injuries.

Light at 220 pounds for such a physically demanding job, Lambert has tremendous range. He set a record by recovering three Oakland fumbles in the 1975 AFC championship game. He is the perfect example of the modern MLB who is able to make his pass drops, sometimes as deep as the end zone, while still remaining in position to choke off a running play.

Lambert is single and lives in Pittsburgh.

WILLIE LANIER
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
Born, Clover, Va., Aug. 21, 1945; Lives, Leawood, Kan.; Morgan State; MLB; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 245.

Willie Lanier threw Kansas City into a near-panic when he said he was going to retire after the 1974 season to pursue a business career with the Philip Morris Company. Obviously, Willie changed his mind and decided to play football. He played so well in 1975 that the coaches voted him to the Pro Bowl squad for the sixth time although he was not able to play.

Four interceptions in 1975 boosted his career total to 24, good enough for eighth place among active AFC players. He and Nick Buoniconti (32) of Miami are the only linebackers to rate among the leaders.

Lanier was honored in 1972 as the NFL Man of the Year in recognition of his status as an outstanding pro football citizen-athlete and five $5,000 scholarships were presented in his name to high school students in the Chiefs' home area.

Willie majored in business administration at Morgan State and has spent the off-season in management training sessions with Philip Morris where he plans to continue his career.

ROLLAND LAWRENCE
ATLANTA FALCONS
Born, March 24, 1951; Franklin, Pa.; Lives, Franklin, Pa.; Tabor U.; DB; Ht. 5-10; Wt. 179.

Rollie Lawrence has stolen his way to the top ranks of the Atlanta Falcons. The one-time flashy running back of little known Tabor U., blossomed as a defensive back last year, his third as a regular with the Falcons.

Signed as a free agent by the club, Lawrence had made only two interceptions in all—one in 1973 and one in 1974—when he put it all together in 1975. The speedy, springy, tough corner back grabbed nine interceptions—third in the leage—and deflected 24 passes. He ran the ball back 163 yards including an 87-yard scoring return against Oakland.

In addition, Rollie made 32 solo tackles and assisted in four others. It's a dangerous way of life for a guy standing only 5-10 and weighing 179 pounds.

During the off-season he keeps busy with golf (he shoots in the 70s) and softball.

LARRY LITTLE
MIAMI DOLPHINS
Born, Groveland, Ga., Nov. 2, 1945; Lives, Miami; Bethune-Cookman; G; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 265.

When the football writers get around to picking their All-Star teams they usually pencil in Larry Little as the right guard. Larry has made the All Pro team five straight years as one of the finest pulling guards to play the game.

Little puts it this way: "I'm interested in knocking people off their feet and making them respect me." It seems to work because Little has been as effective clearing the way for runners such as Don Nottingham and Norm Bulaich as he was when he was knocking down people for Larry Csonka.

Little's contributions to the community are many. He received an honorary doctorate in humanities from Biscayne College in 1972 and was given a special day by his high school in Miami. Larry operates the Gold Coast Summer Camp for underprivileged children. His teammates act as counselors during a free two-week camp for almost 300 kids. Larry is a bachelor, living in southwest Miami.

ARCHIE MANNING
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
Born, May 19, 1949, Cleveland, Miss.; Lives, New Orleans; Mississippi; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 215.

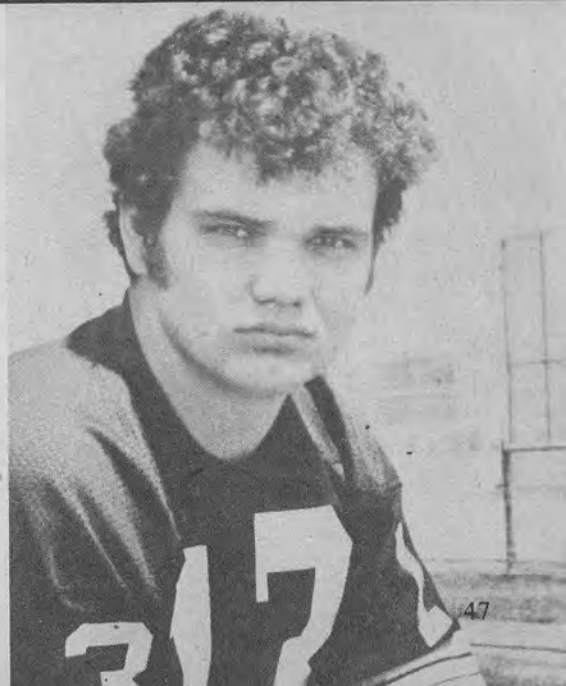
Archie Manning may never get a chance to show his full potential in the pro ranks. The former All-American quarterback from "Ole Miss" has been dogged by illness and injuries.

Severely hampered by a shoulder injury last year, Archie underwent surgery in February in the hopes of being 100 percent for the 1976 season. Not long after camp opened, Manning had a sore shoulder and had to be sidelined.

He injured a knee in 1974 that required post-season surgery. He also missed a couple of games that year because of mononucleosis.

Manning is a fine passer and a good runner when he is healthy.

Despite the aching shoulder Manning labored thorugh the team's first 13 games last year. He completed 159 of 338 passes for 47.0 percent, 1,685 yards and seven touchdowns. He was intercepted 17 times. He ran 36 times, for 186 yards and his life, at times. He was sacked 49 times for a loss of 390 yards. He has piled up 1,206 yards running in his five seasons.



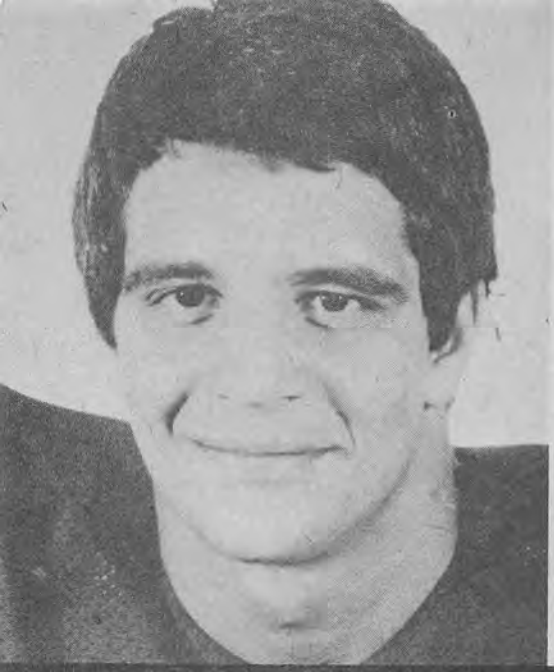
CHESTER MARCOL
GREEN BAY PACKERS
Born, Oct. 29 , 1949. Poland; Lives, Green Bay; Hillsdale College; KS; Ht. 6-0; Wt. 200.

Chester Marcol won the NFL scoring championship with his kicking in two of his first three seasons. Then disaster struck.

The Polish native booted a field goal in the first half of the 1975 opener against Detroit and then injured himself on the kickoff. He tore a quadriceps muscle in his right (kicking) leg and was through for the season.

After a long rehabilitation program he appeared set to resume his successful career.

In 1972 he scored 128 points while kicking 33 field goals in 48 attempts. He followed with 21-35, 82 in 1973 and 25-39, 94 in 1974. He already is the all-time Packer field goal king with 80 in 123 attempts. He has kicked four field goals in one game five times, twice in the 1974 season. His longest pro FG sailed 52 yards against Baltimore last year but he had a 62-yard three-pointer in college, an NAIA record.



ED MARINARO
NEW YORK JETS
Born, New York, March 31, 1950; Lives, New Milford, N.J.; Cornell; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 212.

When the Jets lost John Riggins who played out his option and eventually signed with the Redskins, they started looking for a replacement. They hope the answer is Ed Marinaro, another man looking for a new home after playing out his option with the Vikings. He signed with the Jets in June, shortly before camp opened.

Bud Grant used Marinaro at halfback and capitalized on his pass-catching ability, rather than his ball-carrying talents. The Jets installed Marinaro at fullback as a heavy duty runner. He showed to advantage by leading all rushers in a pre-season test against the Giants.

Marinaro is coming off his best season as a pro, gaining 358 yards rushing and catching 54 passes for 462 yards. The former Cornell star who set NCAA records for career rushing (4,715) and single season (1,881 in 1971) in college, doesn't have the blazing speed of an outside runner. However, he is a durable type with good hands and a solid blocker. He may come into his own as a runner if given more chances to carry the ball.

Marinaro is a bachelor with a Cornell degree in hotel administration. Operating in his home town at Shea Stadium with a sizable Cornell alumni fan club, he could become a big favorite.

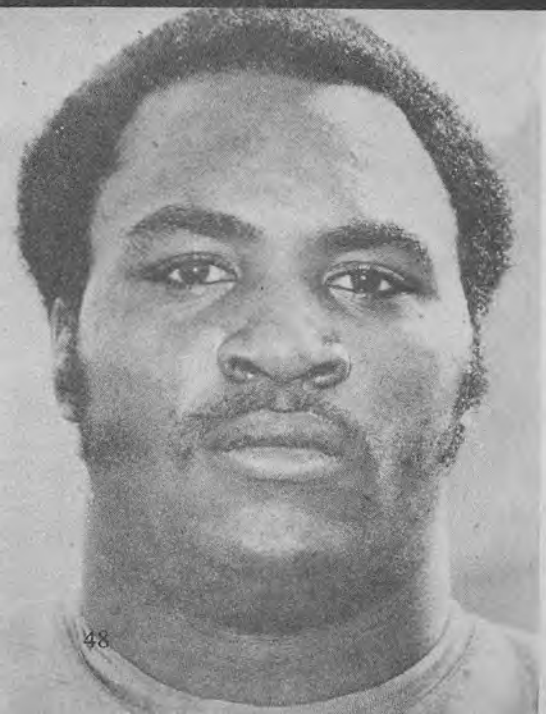
LAWRENCE McCUTCHEON
LOS ANGELES RAMS
Born, June 2, 1950; Plainview, Texas; Lives, Long Beach, Cal.; Colorado State; RB; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 205.

In just three seasons, Larry McCutcheon already has taken over as the No. 5 rusher of all time on the list of the Los Angeles Rams, a team noted for running backs over the years.

The speedy, versatile back from Colorado State has averaged better than 1,000 yards rushing in his three seasons even though an injury cost him a chance to make the "grand" last year.

He picked up 1,097 in his rookie year in '73, 1,108 for a Ram record in 1974, and had 911 going into the last regular game last season. He couldn't play because of a leg injury. The following week, however, he set an NFC playoff record by gaining 202 yards in 37 carries in a 35-23 victory over St. Louis.

A fine receiver as well as runner, Larry grabbed 31 passes for 230 yards and one touchdown to go with his 911 yards and two touchdowns running.



JOHN MENDENHALL
NEW YORK GIANTS
Born, Dec. 3, 1948, Cullen, La.; Lives, Houston, Tex.; Grambling; DT; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 255.

John Mendenhall is another one of those outstanding defensive linemen that Grambling seems to turn out in never-ending numbers.

Hobbled by an ankle injury for most of the 1975 season, Mendy appeared ready to spearhead an improving Giants' defense for the 1976 campaign.

The Giants' No. 3 draft choice in 1972, he earned recognition as one of the outstanding rookies of the year. A knee injury and surgery that followed wiped out his great start in 1973. He had a fine season in 1974, earning All-NFC honors.

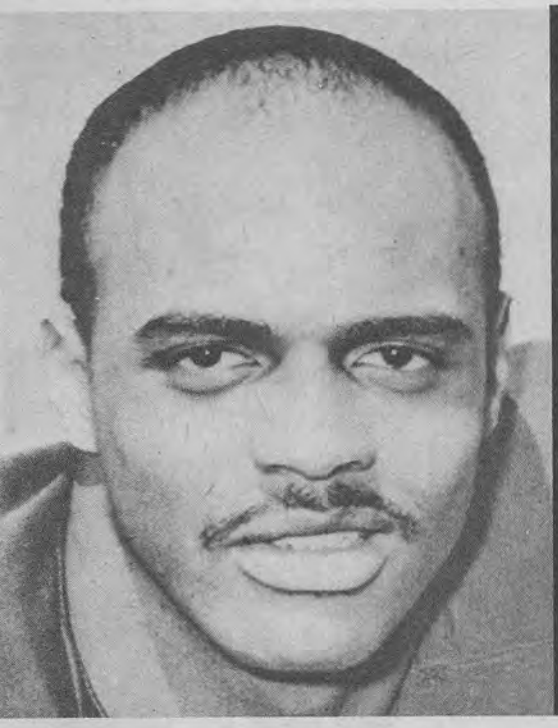
Since this is an even year—his injury years have been on the odd—the Giants hope for the best. A healthy Mendy can spell bed news to the opposition. He's a mean man and a tough tackler when he's full fit.

TERRY METCALF
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS
Born, Sept. 24, 1951; Seattle, Wash.; Lives, St. Louis; Long Beach State; RB; Ht. 5-10; Wt. 185.

His teammates call him "The Franchise,"—and no wonder! He does it all.

Terry Metcalf, a small but elusive and durable runner, set an NFL record in his third pro season last year with combined yardage of 2,462. The St. Louis speedster rushed for 816 yards, added 378 receiving, 960 on kickoff returns, 285 on punt returns, and 23 on fumble returns. He scored nine touchdowns rushing, scored two more with passes, and one each with kickoffs and punts. Further, he passed 51 yards to wide receiver Mel Gray for another touchdown. He became the fourth player in NFL history to account for touchdowns in five different ways in one season.

The water boy and locker room guys better worry about their jobs just in case Terry has some spare time.



LYDELL MITCHELL
BALTIMORE COLTS
Born, Salem, N.J., May 30, 1949; Lives, Baltimore; Penn State; RB; Ht. 5-11; Wt. 195.

The Lydell Mitchell-Franco Harris rivalry, dating back to their years at Penn State when Mitchell was the big star and Harris played in his shadow, took another turn last season when Mitchell became the first 1,000-yard rusher in Baltimore history with 1,193 yards, third best in the NFL.

The versatile running back who led the NFL in pass receiving in 1974 with 72 catches, a record for a back, came right back with another big year as a receiver, tying for the AFC lead with 60 catches.

Mitchell set a club record with five 100-yard games last season for a career total of 10, another Baltimore record. His best day was against Kansas City when he rushed for 178 yards, including a 70-yard TD run.

In his high school days at Salem, N.J., Mitchell scored 999 points but moved on to Penn State as a football star. A consensus All-American he finished fifth in the Heisman Trophy voting before being drafted in the second round by the Colts in 1972. He works for the National Alliance of Businessmen and the U.S. Commerce Department in the off-season.

NAT MOORE
MIAMI DOLPHINS
Born, Tallahassee, Fla., Sept. 19, 1951; Lives, Miami; Miami; WR; Ht. 5-9; Wt. 180.

Nat Moore has successfully made the transition from running back at Florida to a wide receiver with the Miami Dolphins. In two short seasons he has proven himself as a talented receiver and eager blocker.

"He has developed into one of our most dependable pressure players," says Coach Don Shula. "He is poised and does a lot of things instinctively."

Moore is the type who "plays when hurt." He shrugs off an injury. After missing a week of practice due to a sprained toe, groin pull and bruised sternum he came back on Sunday and caught six passes for 89 yards and a TD against Philadelphia.

Born in Tallahassee and raised in Miami he first attended Tennessee-Martin as a freshman but transferred to Florida after playing basketball at Dade Community College South. He had an outstanding junior year but was hobbled by a knee injury that required surgery in his senior year. Miami drafted him No. 3 in 1974.

CRAIG MORTON
NEW YORK GIANTS
Born, Feb. 5, 1943, Flint, Mich.; Lives, New York; California; QB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 210.

This could be a season for Craig Morton to enjoy. The Giants are on the way back with the acquisition of former All-Pro running back Larry Csonka and a young, rebuilding team.

With Csonka ready to bust up the middle, the opposition will have to open up for the pass. It should be an interesting season for Morton if he and Csonka stay healthy and the Giants give them some support.

Morton, a former quarterback with Dallas who had to battle Don Meredith and Roger Staubach for the starting job, now has 1½ seasons with the Giants behind him. He completed 186 passes in 363 attempts for 2,359 yards and 11 touchdowns last year.

Craig, out of the University of California, had 10 seasons with the Cowboys. He led them to the Super Bowl in 1970, losing a heart-breaker to Baltimore in the closing seconds on a Jim O'Brien field goal.

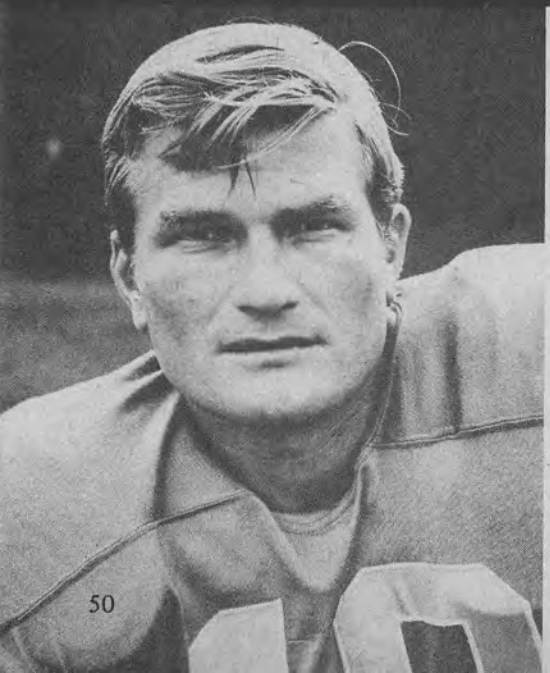
CHUCK MUNCIE
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
Born, March 17, 1953, Uniontown, Pa.; Lives, Oakland, Cal.; California; RB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 230.

A powerful and fast back wtih great acceleration, Chuck Muncie has everything to make it big in the National Football League.

The All-American running back from California was the No. 1 draft pick of the New Orleans Saints. The Saints handed him a starting berth and the rest was up to Muncie, who could be his own worst enemy.

Muncie showed he could run and also that he could pass on the halfback option play during the 1976 exhibition season. He also was fined for failing to show up on time in camp a couple of times.

At California, Muncie set a school record for total yardage (3,052) and touchdowns (38). He was the MVP of the East-West and Japan Bowl games and runnerup for the Heisman Award to Ohio State's Archie Griffin.



BILL MUNSON
DETROIT LIONS

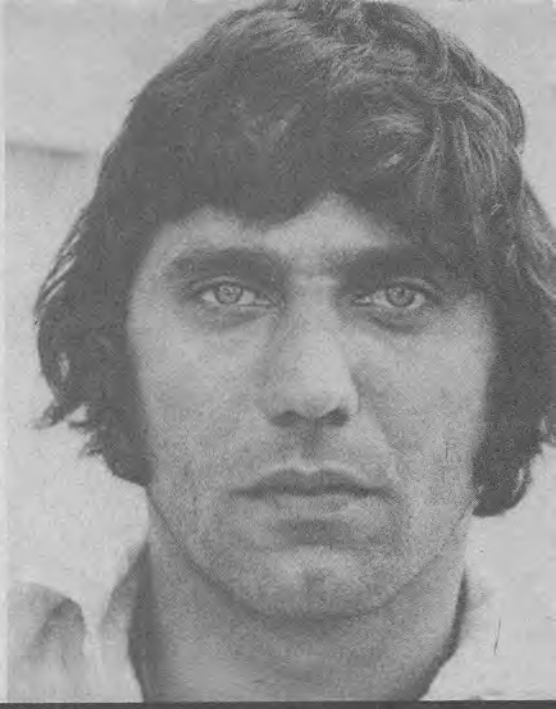
Bill Munson has demonstrated that he is one of the best throwing quarterbacks in the National Football League. Injuries the last two seasons have kept him from gaining recognition as one of the top quarterbacks.

The 36-year-old signal caller from Utah State played in only five games last year but completed 65 of 109 passes to go over the "grand" mark in completions. He now has 1,003 in 1,864 in 12 seasons for a 54.5 percentage.

He had an outstanding season in 1974 until he suffered a shoulder separation in the 11th game that required surgery. He had posted a high 56.8 percentage with 166 in 292 for 1,874 yards and eight touchdowns.

He suffered a knee injury in his third start last year and then had to undergo surgery (cartilage and ligament) after the sixth game.

Munson entered the 1976 season ranked as No. 7 among active passers in the NFC. He ranks second in Detroit history in touchdown passes and completions.



JOE NAMATH
NEW YORK JETS
Born, Beaver Falls, Pa., May 31, 1943; Lives, New York; Alabama; QB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 200.

This is the 12th year for Joe Namath, now operating at a $500,000 salary level and hopeful of making up for a disappointing 1975 season.

The handwriting is on the wall for Namath with his potential successor, Richard Todd, another Alabama product, already on the scene as an understudy.

Namath's knee problems are legion. Everybody knows about his long string of operations, his bouts with the club's curfew rules and his battles with the pro football organization. In recent years he appears to have mellowed.

Broadway Joe tossed 15 TD passes last year but completed only 48.2 percent of his passes and was intercepted 28 times, the most of his career. The overall Jet attack sputtered and so did Joe.

The advent of a new coach, Lou Holtz, with some new ideas about quarterbacking offers a new challenge to Namath, a drop back QB who once was called by Alabama coach Bear Bryant, "the greatest athlete I've ever coached."

This may or may not be the last time around for Namath but, if it is, he wants to go out blazing. Despite pantyhose commercials and his publicized late hour activities, football still means more to him than anything else.

ROBERT NEWHOUSE
DALLAS COWBOYS
Born, Jan. 9, 1950, Longview, Tex.; Lives, Dallas; Houston; RB; Ht. 5-10; Wt. 205.

The opening was there and Bob Newhouse grabbed it and didn't let go. He doesn't intend to let up now.

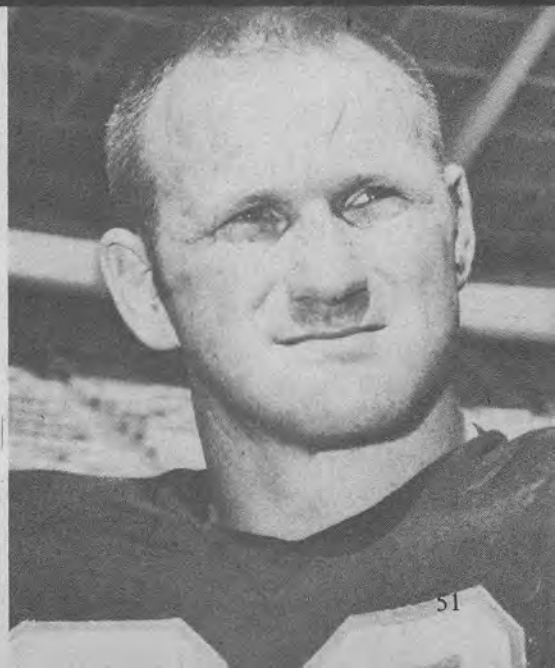
The stocky running back from Houston was set to challenge Walt Garrison for the starting fullback job with Dallas in 1975. But he was handed the job when Garrison was racked up by a bull in the rodeo.

Newhouse rushed for 930 yards, fourth in the NFC, caught 34 passes for 275 yards, and tossed a 46-yard pass for a touchdown.

"The 1975 season was really the first I've stayed in one position," says Newhouse, who believes he can do a lot better now that he's shown what he can do.

Newhouse also does his share of the blocking despite his size.

"There's no technique for blocking big linemen," he says. "You just hit them and then get up and hit them again...if you're able."



TOMMY NOBIS
ATLANTA FALCONS
Born, Sept. 20, 1943, San Antonio, Tex.; Lives, Atlanta; Texas; LB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 243.

Tommy Nobis heads into his 11th pro season still rated as the toughest man to beat on the Atlanta Falcons.

The last of the original 1966 Falcons, the rugged linebacker topped his team for the ninth time in tackles last year. He had 91 solo stops, 24 assists, knocked down two passes, forced one fumble and had one sack of the quarterback.

A year before he racked up 121 individual tackles in playing a full 14 game schedule for the third straight year. He missed one game last season.

In Atlanta they still talk about Tough Tommy's super game against New Orleans on Sept. 29, 1974. He made 15 unassisted tackles, eight of them preventing touchdowns.

He was rated "can't miss' when he came up from Texas in 1966. Tommy was a two-time All-American and winner of both the Maxwell and Outland trophies, prestigious college awards.

RILEY ODOMS
DENVER BRONCOS
Born, Corpus Christi, Tex., March 1, 1950; Lives, Corpus Christi, Tex.; Houston; TE; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 230.

When John Ralston left the college ranks to join the pros as head coach of the Denver Broncos the first player he drafted was Riley Odoms, an All-American tight end at Houston.

Bronco supporters insist Odoms is the very best in the business and it is easy to make a case for the big fellow from Corpus Christi, Tex. He has been in the Pro Bowl for three straight years and was the tight end on the 1975 All-NFL team picked by the Associated Press, NEA and the Professional Football Writers of America.

Odoms caught 40 passes for 544 yards last year after leading the Broncos with 42 receptions in 1974 and 43 in 1973. In four years he has caught 17 TD passes.

Ralston likes to try to cross up the opposition by using Odoms on a reverse about five times a year. He has averaged 9.3 yards per carry on those jaunts, and 15.0 per catch for his pass receiving.

MERLIN OLSEN
LOS ANGELES RAMS
Born, Sept. 15, 1940, Logan, Utah; Lives, San Merino, Calif.; Utah State; DT; Ht. 6-5; Wt. 270.

Merlin Olsen heads into his 15th NFL season with the enthusiasm of a rookie. Most coaches wish their rookies would be as zestful as this all-time line great of pro football.

The 6-5, 270-pound stickout from Utah State has been named to the Pro Bowl team in all 14 of his previous seasons, a league record. A knee injury forced him out of the 1971 post-season game.

Merlin had been thinking about retirement before the 1975 season but changed his mind. It was a lucky thing for the Rams, who finished first in the NFC's Western Division with a 12-2 record.

Olsen once again was the steadying influence on a defensive unit that led the NFL in fewest points allowed (135) and finished second in the NFC in total defense, rushing defense and passing defense.

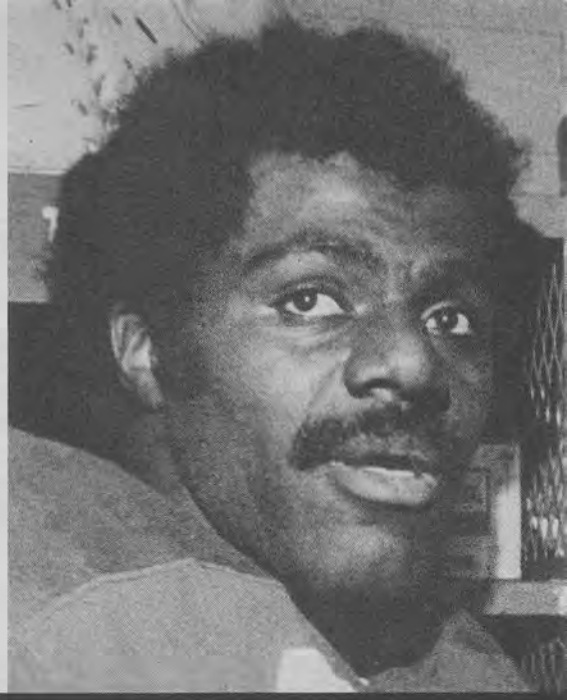
At the finish of the 1975 season Olsen had started 184 consecutive games for the Rams, a club record.

JIM OTIS
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS
Born, April 29, 1948, Celina, Ohio; Lives, St. Louis; Ohio State; RB; Ht. 6-0; Wt. 225.

Jim Otis, an All-American at Ohio State but a flop in the pros with New Orleans and Kansas City and for one season with St. Louis, asked Coach Don Coryell to "play me or let me go." He was prepared to quit unless the St. Louis boss gave him a shot at a regular job as fullback.

Coyrell gave him the chance and Otis responded with 664 yards in 158 carries that earned him the post in 1974. He solidified his position and gave the Cardinals an outstanding threat up the middle last year with a St. Louis record and the NFC rushing title on 1,076 yards in 269 carries.

He racked up four 100-yard rushing games including a 147-yard effort against Chicago in the team's next-to-last game of the season. That put him in first place in the NFC. He bucked for five TDs and grabbed a pass for another.



ALAN PAGE
MINNESOTA VIKINGS
Born, Aug. 7, 1945, Canton, Ohio; Lives, Minneapolis; Notre Dame; DT; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 245.

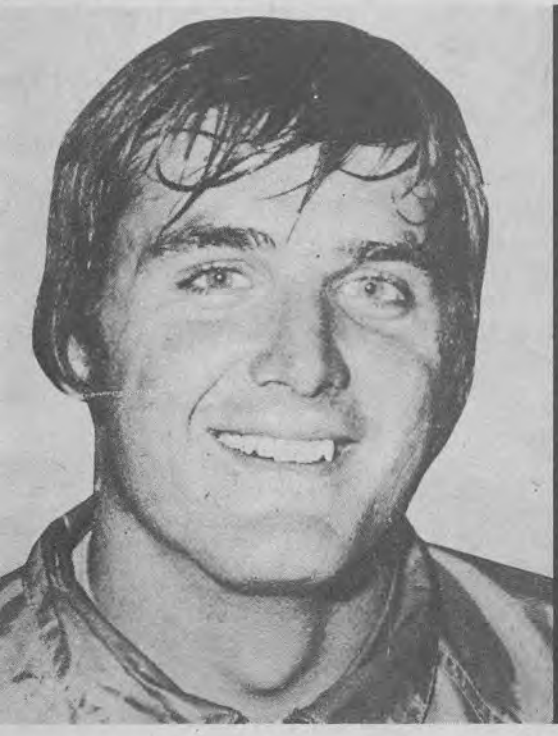
There are many people who believe football linemen are dummies. They should talk to Alan Page of Minnesota.

At 31 and in his 10th pro season, Page already has earned recognition as one of the all-time greats of pro football.

Page is a defensive tackle standing 6-4 and weighting 245. He is big, fast and smart. He was named All-Pro in 1975 for the sixth time and played in his seventh straight Pro Bowl. He was named the NFL's Most Valuable Player in 1971—the first defensive player ever to receive that honor.

In maintaining his excellence last year, he had 14 quarterback sacks and three assists, caused seven fumbles and blocked one conversion and one field goal attempt. He had 82 tackles and 40 assists to rank second on the team.

He earned a degree in political science at Notre Dame, where he was an All-American. He resides in Minneapolis, attending law school in the off-season. He is married and has three children.



DAN PASTORINI
HOUSTON OILERS
Born, Sonora, Calif., May 26, 1949; Lives, Houston; Santa Clara; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 205.

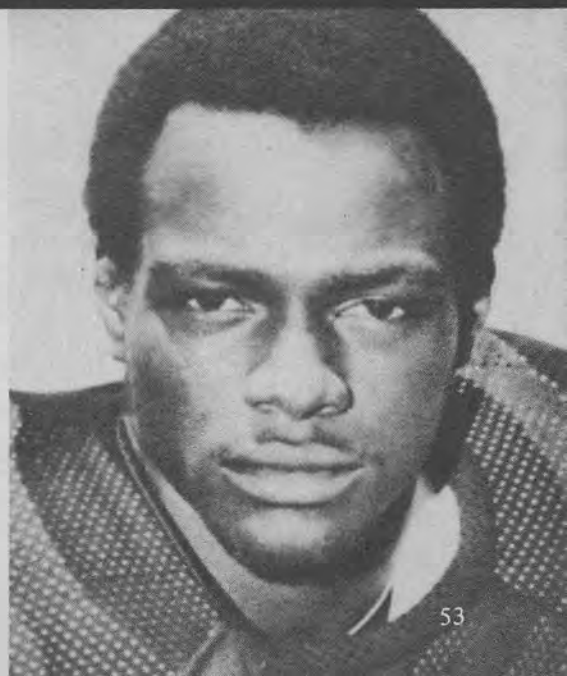
Somebody ought to put the pitching machine speedometer on one of Dan Pastorini's passes. The Oilers' quarterback has one of the strongest arms in football, even if he does get impatient at times.

Pastorini learned to check his instincts to improvise and became a more consistent quarterback in 1975 when he led the Oilers to a 10-4 record, their best since 1962.

King Hill, a better than fair passer in his playing days, has helped Pastorini in his role as an assistant coach. Danny earned Pro Bowl recognition last winter and responded with a TD pass to Kenny Burrough.

Pastorini was such a promising baseball pitcher that he was drafted by the New York Yankees before he was picked No. 1 by Houston's Oilers in 1971. He has been a starter since his rookie year in a swim-or-sink challenge that finally is paying off. In addition to his QB chores, Pastorini also handles the Oilers' punting.

During the off-season he works in the Public Relations field for oil companies, makes an occasional movie and races motor boats.



WALTER PAYTON
CHICAGO BEARS
Born, July 25, 1954, Columbia, Miss.; Lives Jackson, Miss.; Jackson State; RB; Ht. 5-10½; Wt. 211.

Rated "can't miss" in the scouting reports, Walter Payton made the predictors look real good with a rousing rookie season in 1975 with the Chicago Bears. The Bears, on the way back, feel they have a coming 1,000-yarder in the hard-running strong man out of Jackson State.

He won the NFL kickoff return title with a 31.7 yard average and rated ninth among the NFC's runners with 679 yards, most by a Bear running back since Gale Sayers dashed for 1,032 in 1969. Payton also scored seven touchdowns to pace the club in that department.

At Jackson State he set an NCAA record with 464 points, leading the nation in 1973 with 160. He was first running back and No. 4 pick in the 1975 draft.

His nickname is "Sweetness" which brings no laughs from the tacklers he runs over. During the off-season he works as a sportscaster for a television station in Jackson. He's also working on a master's degree in communications at Jackson State.

DREW PEARSON
DALLAS COWBOYS
Born, Jan. 12, 1951, South River, N.J.; Lives, Dallas; Tulsa; WR; Ht. 6-0; Wt. 185.

What makes Drew Pearson such an outstanding pass receiver?

"Feel," says Coach Tom Landry of the Dallas Cowboys. "A great sense of feel. You can't coach it. You have to have it.

"He has a sense of where the defenders are and can find the open spot. In today's adjusting, moving zone defenses, this is an asset that is among the most valuable for any receiver. That great feel, almost an instinct as to where people are around him, is something you don't coach. He makes the clutch catches that you have to have."

Pearson, in his third season after college ball at Tulsa, grabbed 46 passes for 822 yards and eight touchdowns last year although he was often double and triple-teamed. He was given that attention following his soph season performance of 62 grabs for 1,087 yards and two touchdowns.

Tulsa was geared for the run when Pearson played there and he was overlooked by most scouts. The Cowboys landed him as a free agent.

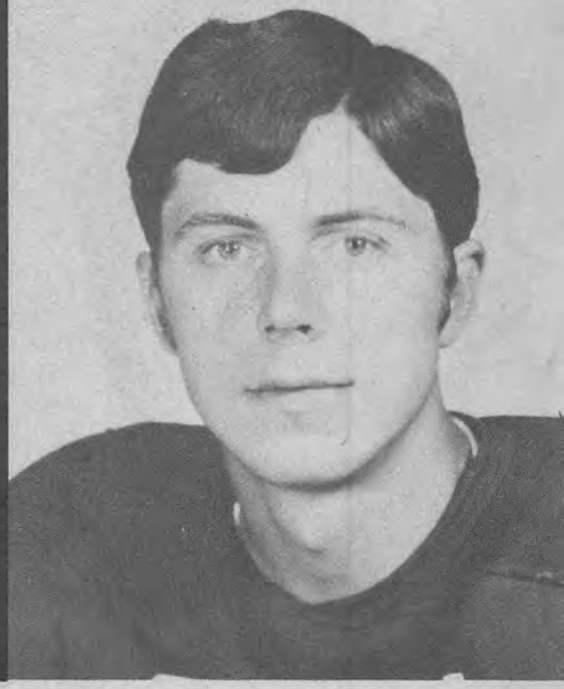
MIKE PHIPPS
CLEVELAND BROWNS
Born, Shelbyville, Ind. Nov. 19, 1947; Lives, Northfield, Ohio; Purdue; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 205.

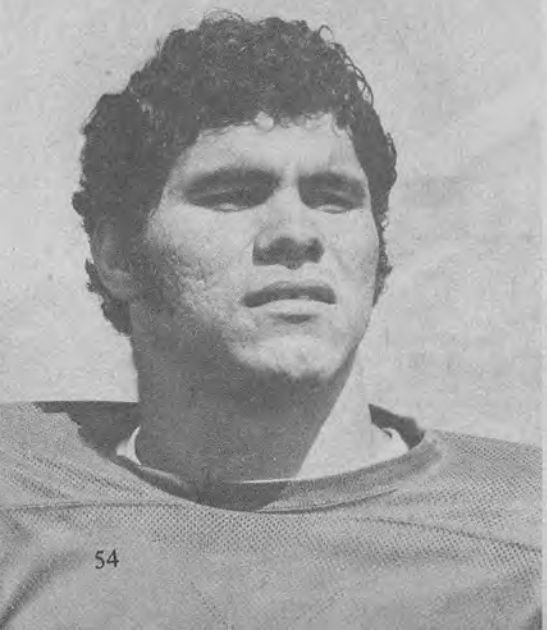
This is Mike Phipps' seventh year in the NFL and the Browns still are waiting for him to emerge from the status of promising prospect to full scale No. 1 quarterback. Mike has been good and bad, taking the long path from bench to starter and back again. Coach Forrest Gregg and all the Browns hope this will be the year he really takes charge.

Phipps looked like a No. 1 last November 23 when he hit with 23 of 36 against the Bengals and snapped Cleveland's nine-game losing streak. In the final five weeks of the season he completed 92 of 164 for 1,022 yards and all of his season's total of four TDs.

Credit for some of the improvement must go to Blanton Collier, the former head coach who returned to the Browns in 1975 as an assistant and spent many long hours with Phipps. Make has a tendency to scramble but last year he began to find his secondary receivers and get rid of the ball quickly.

Drafted No. 1 in 1970 because the Browns traded Paul Warfield to Miami to get the Dolphins' draft choice, Phipps rode the bench for two years and still waits for that one big year.





JIM PLUNKETT
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
Born, Dec. 5, 1947, San Jose, Calif,; Lives, San Jose; Stanford; QB; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 212.

Quarterback Jim Plunkett came "home" in 1976 when he was traded by the New England Patriots to the San Francisco 49ers.

It cost the 49ers plenty to get the former All-American from Stanford. The 49ers gave up quarterback Tom Owen, two first round draft choices in 1976 and a first and second round draft choice in 1977.

The 49ers, however, feel the unselfish passing star can lead the team back to the top in the NFC's Western Division.

Plunkett has averaged better than a touchdown pass per game with 62 in 61 games. Injuries hampered him in the last two seasons. He played the last four games of the 1974 season with torn knee cartilage, requiring post-season surgery, and a torn hamstring. He still passed for 19 touchdowns that year.

A pre-season shoulder separation limited his play last year.

He was born and still lives in San Jose, Calif. He is devoted to his blind parents.

GREG PRUITT
CLEVELAND BROWNS
Born, Houston, Tex., Aug. 18, 1951; Lives, Houston; Oklahoma; RB; Ht. 5-10; Wt. 190.

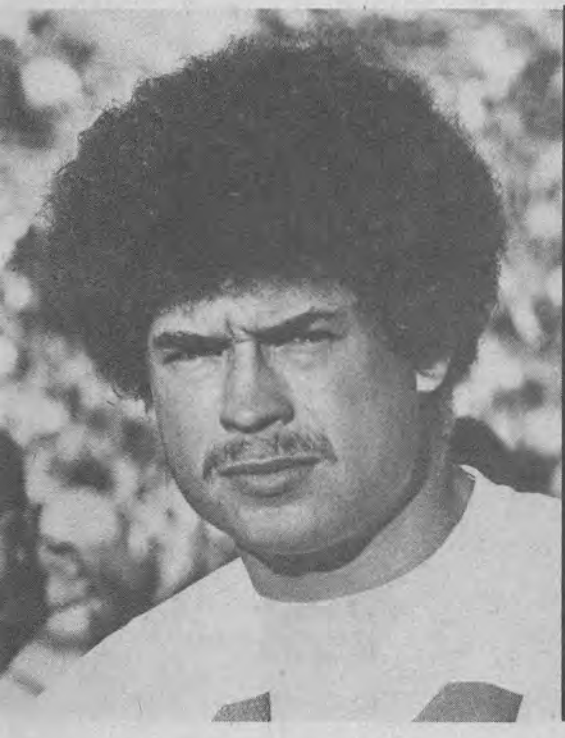
Greg Pruitt wears tearaway shirts and he sometimes goes through as many as seven—at a cost to Art Modell of $140—in one game. Art didn't mind last year and gladly paid the bill when Pruitt cut loose for 214 yards 7 shirts and three TDs on 26 carries against the Chiefs last December 14.

"He reminds me of a deer," said safety Mike Sensibaugh, then with Kansas City. "He plants his foot and suddenly cuts. I was lucky to get a piece of his jersey."

Greg is one of those little men whose NFL credentials were questioned when he was drafted out of Oklahoma in 1973. He has become one of the most exciting players in Cleveland history as a runner, receiver, punt return and kickoff return artist and even as an occasional passer.

"A little guy has more incentive," said Pruitt. "Sometimes I sort of hide behind a big tackle or guard. I have to be careful to position myself so that I can see what's out in front."

Pruitt returned to Oklahoma at the end of each of the last three seasons to complete work on his degree in journalism.



JOHN RIGGINS
WASHINGTON REDSKINS
Born, Aug. 4, 1949; Centralia, Kan.; Lives, Centralia; Kansas; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 230.

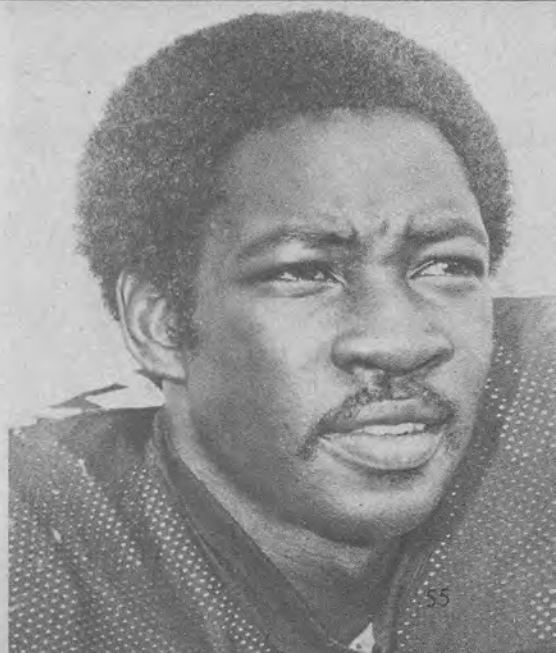
John Riggins wants to be a No. 1 on a pro football team so he piled up his 1,005 yards—a Jet record—and took his football to Washington.

The big, speedy fullback knows that as long as Joe Namath is with the New York Jets anyone else, no matter how good, is going to have to play second fiddle in gold and glory.

The 6-2, 230-pound fullback with the 9.8 seconds speed for the 100, became the first Jet ever to rush for a 1,000 yards when he romped for 1,005 and eight touchdowns last year. In addition Big John caught 30 passes for 363 yards and one touchdown.

Three years ago Riggins went home to Kansas when the Jets didn't leap at his offer to play for $125,000 a season. He finally accepted $55,000 but didn't forget.

So when the 1975 season ended, his fifth as a pro Riggins became a free agent. He listened to what the Jets had to offer and then listened to a few other bids before signing with the Skins.



KEN RILEY
CINCINNATI BENGALS
Born, Bartow, Fla., Aug. 6, 1947; Lives, Jacksonville, Fla.; Florida A & M; CB; Ht. 5-11; Wt. 182.

Ken Riley is one of the underrated stars of the Cincinnati Bengals, a wily, wise cornerback whose feats seem to be overlooked because others talk louder.

The Bengals call Riley "The Rattler" and you can let your imagination fill in the gaps. He had one of his best years in 1975 with six interceptions for a total of 76 yards. One of Ken's thefts went all the way for a touchdown, 30 yards, against Atlanta. He is the Bengals' all-time leading interceptor with 30 to his credit.

A smart, heady player, Riley has been a starter at a corner job since he joined the club as a sixth-round draft choice in 1969 out of Florida A & M where he was a quarterback. As a rookie he also returned kickoffs.

Ken and his wife, Barbara, live in Jacksonville, Fla. with their two children, Kimberly and Kenneth 2nd.

CHARLIE SANDERS
DETROIT LIONS
Born, Aug. 25, 1946, Greensboro, N.C.; Lives, Pontiac, Mich.; Minnesota; TE; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 230.

If you had to pick a player to personify the perfect tight end, you'd single out Charlie Sanders.

The eight year veteran of the Detroit Lions catches passes like a wide receiver, blocks like a tackle, runs like a halfback and has height (6-4) and weight (230) to go with it all.

Sanders, grabbed 37 passes for 486 yards and three touchdowns in 1975 to lead the Lions in receiving for the fifth time in eight years. He was picked for the Pro Bowl for the sixth time.

The Minnesota product has missed only seven games in eight years. He sat out one game last year and played in only two plays of another because of shoulder and heel injuries.

He needs only 39 catches this season to become the top receiver in Lion history.

LEROY SELMON
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
Born, Eufaula, Okla., Oct. 20, 1954; Lives, Norman, Okla.; Oklahoma; DE; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 262.

John McKay, the Tampa Bay coach, may or may not be a sure judge of pro talent. But he certainly should know how to assess the college crop after his years of success at Southern California.

"Leroy Selmon is one of the greatest defensive linemen I have ever watched," says McKay. "He has great quickness and lateral movement. He is the type of player from which we can build a defensive line."

Leroy comes from the famous Selmon family of Eufaula, Okla. which also contributed another son, Dewey, to the Tampa Bay roster. With the entire collegiate crop at his disposal, McKay selected Leroy as No. 1 draft pick in the entire NFL.

Leroy made everybody's All-American team and won the Outland Trophy and the Vince Lombardi Trophy. In 1975 at Oklahoma he led the team with 132 tackles, recovered four fumbles and blocked a punt.

If Leroy Selmon doesn't make it big, the Tampa Bay Bucs may never recover.

JERRY SHERK
CLEVELAND BROWNS
Born, Grants Pass, Ore., July 7, 1948; Lives, Cardiff, Calif.; Oklahoma State; DT; Ht. 6-5; Wt. 250.

Dick Modzelewski, the Browns' defensive line coach, puts it on the line. "Jerry Sherk is the best defensive tackle in the NFL," says Big Mo. And he's not all alone. Sherk has played in the last three Pro Bowl games and has been named twice in the last four years by the Cleveland Touchdown Club as the team's best defensive player.

"I don't know anybody I'd rather have at defensive tackle," says head coach Forrest Gregg. "I don't see how he can play any better than last year. It doesn't make any difference what the score is, he plays as hard as he can."

Sherk has teamed with Walter Johnson as the Browns' defensive tackles since 1970, the year he came out of Oklahoma State as a No. 2 draft. He was a Big Eight heavyweight wrestling champ in college and credits that sport for much of his strength and agility.

A newlywed (April 3, 1976), Sherk recently bought a home in Cardiff, Calif., near San Diego.

O.J. SIMPSON
BUFFALO BILLS
Born, San Francisco, July 9, 1947; Lives, Los Angeles; RB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 212.

When O.J. Simpson finally agreed to stay in Buffalo after Owner Ralph Wilson gave him three one-year contracts for more than $2.5 million, the fans were assured of another exciting season in the Buffalo area. It would have been a shame if O.J. had remained out of football because his plans of forcing a trade that would bring him to the Rams broke down when Los Angeles rufused to meet Wilson's demands.

O.J. stands No. 4 on the all-time rushing list of the NFL with 8,123 yards to show for his first eight pro seasons. With Joe Perry's 8,378 yards just ahead and Jim Taylor's 8,597 within easy reach, it seems only a matter of time before "The Juice" will be No. 2, trailing only Jim Brown's 12,312. Now that he has agreed to play three more years, he should pass Brown and become the top runner of all time unless he is seriously injured.

O.J. already holds the NFL record for TDs in a year (23 in 1975), most yards in a season (2,003 in 1973) and most rushing yardage in a game (250 in 1973 vs. New England). He also has 32 games of 100 yards or more and three of over 200 yards.

STEVE SPURRIER
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

It is a brand new world in an old familiar setting for Steve Spurrier who played his college football at Florida, his pro at San Francisco and now finds himself back home in Tampa Bay with the expansion Buccaneers.

"I don't know how long it's going to take to make us contenders," he said. "But I think we will put on a show. Who knows how many we'll win. It may be more than most people think."

During his nine years at San Francisco, Spurrier alternated between raw rookie status, to No. 1 to backup to bench rider. He came to Tampa Bay for Willie McGee, Bruce Elia and a bonus draft choice.

Spurrier started most of the games in 1972 when John Brodie was hurt and had established himself as No. 1 prior to the 1974 season when an injury put him out for the year. He appeared in 11 games with the 49ers last year and led them to an upset win over the Rams, 24-23.

Steve's greatest days were in college at Florida where he won the Heisman Trophy and set 15 school records while throwing 37 TD passes.

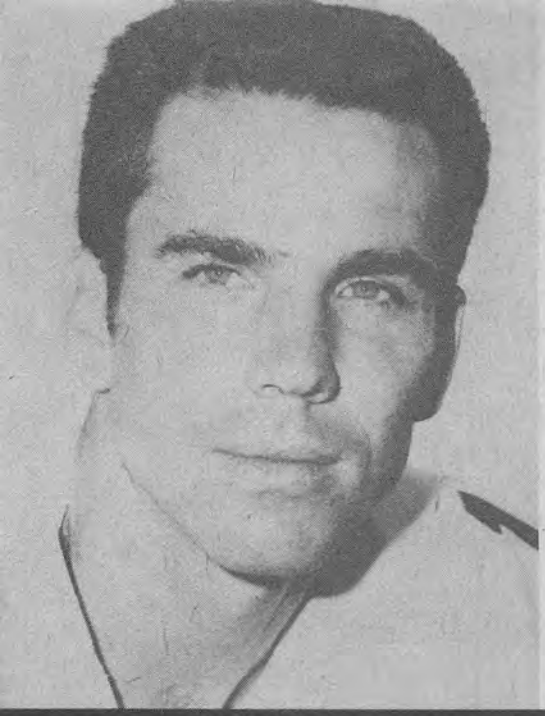
KEN STABLER
OAKLAND RAIDERS
Born, Foley, Ala., Dec. 25, 1945; Lives, San Ramon, Calif.; Alabama; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 215.

The importance of a healthy Ken Stabler to the Oakland Raiders never was demonstrated more clearly than last season. With Stabler hobbling around on a wrenched knee, the Raiders had only two touchdown passes in their first five games in 1975, losing two and barely getting past San Diego 6-0 on two field goals.

Stabler got healthy and the Raiders took off, winning seven in a row while Stabler hit with 13 TD passes. The club rolled on to a fourth straight Western Division title in the AFC and barely succumbed to the Super Bowl-bound Steelers in an icy championship game.

The left-handed dart thrower from Alabama, another of Bear Bryant's products, has a lifetime accuracy percentage of 58.7 and is zooming in on the 10,000-yard mark with 7,606 in his first six years. Stabler was a Pro Bowl starter in 1973 and 1974 but had to decline an invitation in 1975 because of an injury. He has played in 70 consecutive regular season games, going into the 1976 season.

When he isn't running the club he holds the football on extra point and field goal attempts. During the off-season Stabler divides his time between Alabama and San Ramon, Calif.



ROGER STAUBACH
DALLAS COWBOYS
Born, Feb. 5, 1942, Cincinnati; Lives, Dallas; Navy; QB; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 197.

"He's better than ever," says Coach Tom Landry talking about star quarterback Roger Staubach. And this you better believe.

Staubach entered his eighth pro season, all with the Dallas Cowboys, after an outstanding comeback performance that carried the Cowboys to the Super Bowl against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Although Dallas bowed 21-17, it still was a great year for a team which was supposed to be in the rebuilding stage.

Hampered by injuries, Staubach, a star with Navy in his college days, slipped in '74. Dallas failed to make the playoffs for the first time in nine years.

The agile and confident quarterback hit on 198 passes, breaking his own single-season record, and completing 17 scoring tosses. He piled up 2,666 yards in the air and added 316 more on the ground with 55 carries. And, he rushed for four touchdowns. He now has topped the 10,000 yard mark in passing with 10,589.

Staubach spent four years in the Navy after graduation from the Naval Academy in 1965. The Cowboys had drafted him as a future choice.

JAN STENERUD
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
Born, Fetsend, Norway, Nov. 26, 1943; Lives Overland Park, Kan.; Montana State; K; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 187.

Unless Jan Stenerud loses his kicking touch, the transplanted Norwegian will go over the 1,000-point mark in his NFL career long before Super Bowl XI is played in the Rose Bowl.

Stenerud still is haunted by the memory of the 32-yard field goal he missed Dec. 25, 1971 with only 35 seconds to play. The game eventually went into overtime, became the longest in NFL history before Garo Yepremian won it for Miami with a FG in the second overtime period.

Jan was born in Norway and came to Montana State on a skiing scholarship. He was discovered as a soccer-style kicker by Jim Sweeney, the football coach. Drafted No. 3 as a "future" in 1966, Stenerud joined the Chiefs of the old AFL in 1966.

Among his accomplishments was setting a record with 16 consecutive field goal successes in 1969, a mark tied by Don Cockroft last season.

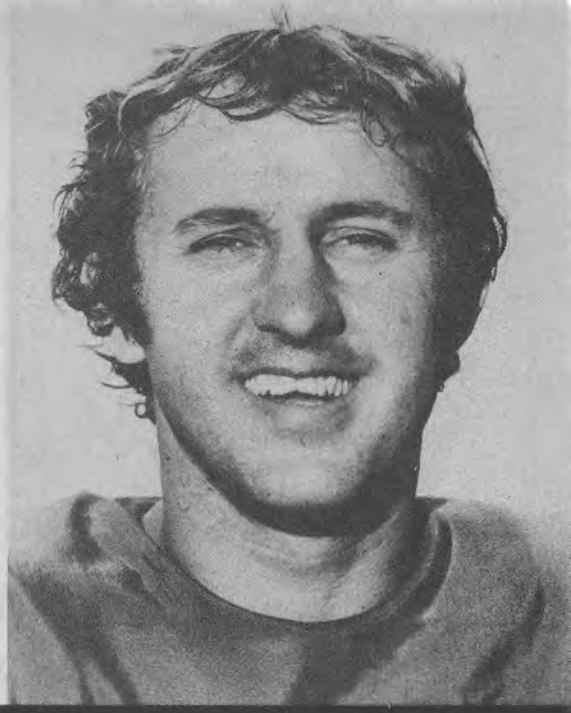
LYNN SWANN
PITTSBURGH STEELERS
Born, Alcoa, Tenn., March 7, 1952; Lives, Marina Del Rey, Calif.; Southern California; WR; Ht. 5-10; Wt. 180.

In the traumatic week before Super Bowl X there was doubt that Lynn Swann would be able to play. The fleet receiver from Southern California had been knocked out of the AFC title game with Oakland by a concussion that sent him to the hospital. He came to Miami for the Super date with Dallas still an unknown quantity.

Swann confided to friends that he still was a little dizzy while he sat on the sidelines and watched the Steelers do their early work for the Cowboys. He said he'd be ready Sunday but nobody was sure.

The Cowboys who had spoken out about "getting" Swann in the big game were too busy watching him catch Terry Bradshaw passes to do much about it. Swann grabbed four for a record 161 yards. The big one was a 64-yard game-winner for a TD in the fourth quarter as Bradshaw was blitzed by a pair of Cowboy defenders. Earlier in the game Swann had made a sensational grab near the sidelines for a vital first down.

Writers covering Super Bowl X voted Swann the MVP Award. A week later he played in his first Pro Bowl after making first team All-NFL teams selected by the wire services, football papers and the Football Writers Association.



FRAN TARKENTON
MINNESOTA VIKINGS
Born, Feb. 3, 1940, Richmond, Va.; Lives, Atlanta; Georgia; QB; Ht. 6-0; Wt. 190.

At 36 and in his 16th pro year, Minnesota's Fran Tarkenton remains "The quarterback to beat" when it comes to top honors in the National Football League.

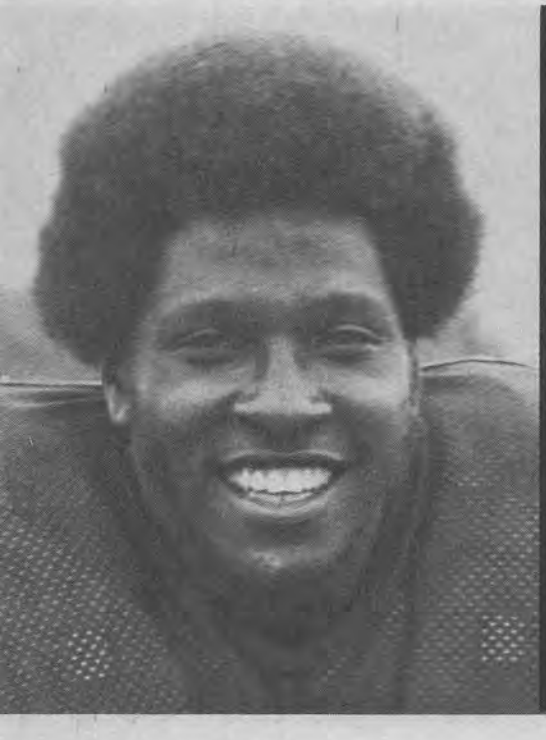
The famed "Fran the Scram" has taken over some of the all-time passing titles held by Johnny Unitas and expects to surpass Johnny U. in several other categories this year.

Last season Tark completed 273 passes in 425 attempts for 2,994 yards and 25 touchdowns. He now holds the records for career passes attempted (5,225), completions (2,931) and touchdowns (291), all set by Unitas. He has 38,840 yards, second only to Unitas' 40,239.

Tarkenton has rushed for more yards (3,629) then any QB in NFL history and has scored 30 touchdowns.

A third round draft pick of the Vikes in 1961, Fran was traded to the Giants in 1967 and then returned to the Vikes in 1972 in another deal with the Giants.

Durable and exciting to watch, Tarkenton has never failed to start an NFL game because of an injury.



MIKE THOMAS
WASHINGTON REDSKINS
Born, July 17, 1953, Greenville, Tex.; Lives, Reston, Va.; Nevada-Las Vegas; RB; Ht. 5-11; Wt. 190.

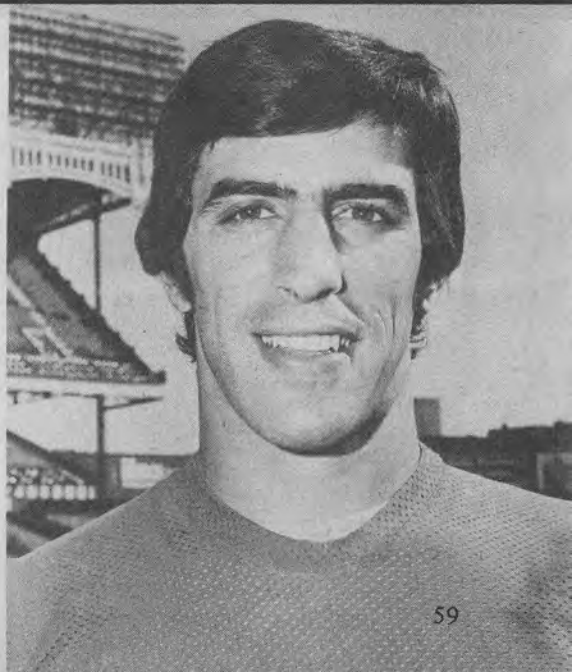
The Redskins are loaded with veteran running backs collected from near and far by Coach George Allen but most of them have to take a back seat now to 23-year-old Mike Thomas.

Thomas, a rookie from Nevada-Las Vegas, grabbed the spotlight—and held it—in a relief role in the team's fourth game of the 1975 season. Mike ran for 100-yards—the first of his three 100 and up games—in the victory over the Cardinals.

He started the remaining eight games and finished with 919 yards and four touchdowns rushing, and 40 catches, 483 yards and three touchdowns pass receiving. In rushing he was 10th in the NFL and 5th in the NFC.

The fifth round draft choice wound up being named Offensive Rookie of the Year.

It wasn't too much of a surprise to those who watched his spectacular running in college. In his two years with the Rebels, he led the way with 40 touchdowns and 3,149 yards rushing.



BOB TUCKER
NEW YORK GIANTS
Born, June 8, 1945, Hazelton, Pa.; Lives, White Plains, N.Y.; Bloomsburg State; TE; Ht. 6-3; Wt. 230.

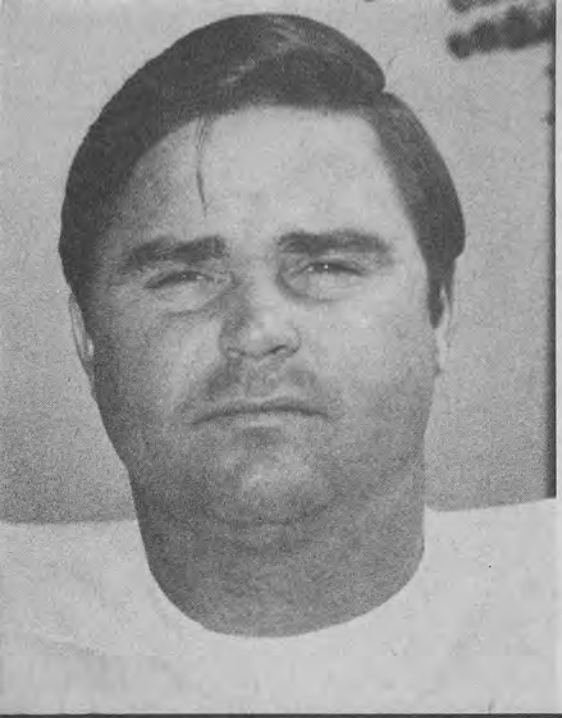
Bob Tucker is one of those rare bargains who makes an owner and general manager glow with happiness.

The tight end came out of Bloomsburg (Pa.) State and the Giants signed him as a free agent in 1970. He immediately beat out Aaron Thomas for the starting tight end post, grabbing 40 passes for 571 yards and five touchdowns.

Tucker has held the job since, averaging 46.5 receptions for his six years. He became the first tight end in NFL history to win the receiving title when he bagged 59 for 791 yards and four touchdowns in 1971. He also was the first Giant end to earn an individual title since 1935.

Injuries hampered him in 1975 when he caught only 34 passes for 484 yards and one touchdown.

Tucker is a strong blocker and a hard runner.



JIM TURNER
DENVER BRONCOS
Born, Martinez, Calif., March 28, 1941; Lives, Denver; Utah State; K; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 205.

Jim Turner has been kicking field goals in the NFL (and the AFL) since 1964 and most everybody, except Coach John Ralston and Turner, have forgotten that Jim once played quarterback for Ralston at Utah State.

Turner does nothing but kick the ball these days and he does that so proficiently that his career point total of 1,147 puts him in fifth place on the NFL's all-time list. Jim is also one of three men to kick more than 250 field goals (the others are George Blanda and Fred Cox).

It has been a long time, too, since Turner kicked the winning points for the Jets (3 FGs) in Super Bowl III for an upset win over the Colts. He was traded to the Broncos in 1971, after leading the Jet scorers for seven years.

Turner's string of 221 consecutive PATs, broken during the 1974 season, was the second longest in NFL history (Tommy Davis has 234). One of his 21 FGs last year was a 53-yarder to beat Cleveland with no time left.

GENE WASHINGTON
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
Born, Jan. 14, 1947, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Lives, San Francisco; Stanford; WR; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 183.

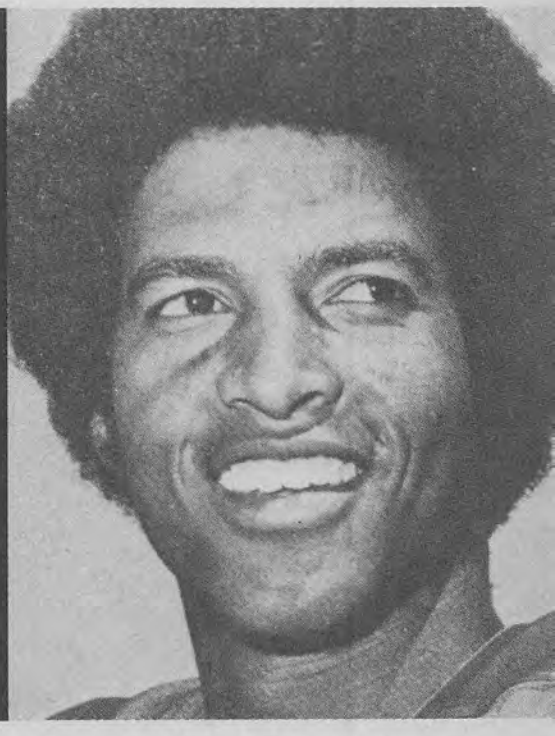
Gene Washington was tickled when he learned quarterback Jim Plunkett had been traded to his 49ers by the New England Patriots.

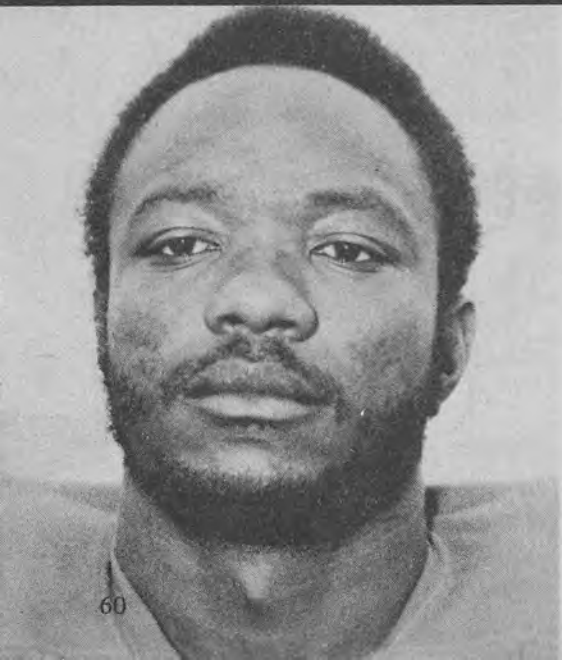
Plunkett was the Stanford quarterback in Washington's senior year at the school. Washington set a single season Stanford record of 71 catches, all on passes thrown by Jim.

"That was only 10 games," says Washington, "I can't wait to see what happens in 14."

In spite of an unsettled quarterback situation in 1975, Gene snared 44 passes for 735 yards and nine touchdowns for his best season since 1972 (46, 918, 12). He has scored 48 touchdowns in 7 seasons, for an average of nearly nine a year.

He and Ted Kwalick were first round draft choices in 1969.





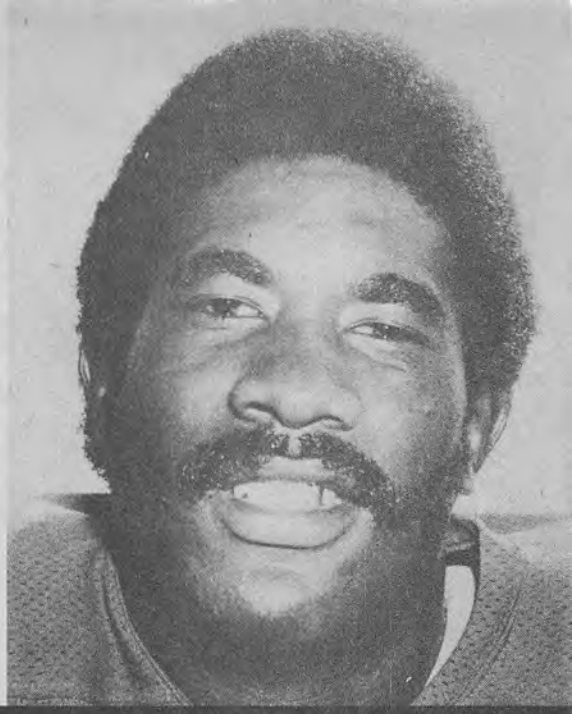
DELVIN WILLIAMS
SAN FRANCISCO 49 ERS
Born, April 17, 1951, Houston, Tex.; Lives, Foster City, Calif.; Kansas; RB; Ht. 6-0; Wt. 197.

Delvin Williams admits that he's not "a thinking man's runner." Everything I do is by instinct. I feel that I have enough speed so that if I can surprise the other team I have a chance to outrun them," he says.

It took Williams a little more than a season to win a starting job with the 49ers. A broken wrist hampered him in most of his rookie season. But last year he became a starter in the third game of the season and held it all the way. He topped the 49ers in running with 631 yards in only 117 carries. That made for a 5.4 yard average, second only to O.J. Simpson's 5.5 in the entire NFL.

Del also was the club's third best receiver on his 34 catches for 370 yards and one touchdown. He rushed for three touchdowns.

In high school in Houston he was a track star and a forward in basketball as well as an outstanding running back.



DON WOODS
SAN DIEGO CHARGERS
Born, Denton, Tex., Feb. 17, 1951; Lives, San Diego Calif.; New Mexico; RB; Ht. 6-1; Wt. 210.

One of the major reasons for the Chargers' sad 2-12 season in 1975 was the injury to Don Woods. The fine young running back who broke the NFL rookie rushing record with 1,162 yards in 1974 played only five games and gained but 317 yards in his sophomore year. He was sidelined by knee surgery after the first five games.

Woods was a bargain basement steal for the Chargers. Green Bay drafted him No. 6 in 1974 but put him on waivers after the final pre-season game. San Diego, at the urging of assistant coach Rudy Feldman who coached him in college, quickly plunked down the $100 waiver price for Woods' contract. He went on to win Rookie of the Year honors and captured all the prizes San Diego hands out.

Don attended New Mexico Highlands in 1971 and 1972 and then moved to New Mexico in 1973. He was a running quarterback at both schools, setting an NAIA total offense record with 2,206 yards of total offense at the Highlands in '72.

Woods now makes his home in San Diego and works for the Encanto Boys Club as a recreation director during the spring and summer.

GARO YEPREMIAN
MIAMI DOLPHINS
Born, Cyprus, June 2, 1944; Lives, Miami; No college; K; Ht. 5-8; Wt. 175.

The little Armenian tie-maker has become an institution in Miami. A witty, entertaining elf, Garo topped all NFL kickers in accuracy last year with 13 of 16 for 81.3 percent.

After years of kicking on the Orange Bowl Poly Turf, the leftfooted booter now works on Prescription Athletic Turf. It will be interesting to compare the final figures.

Garo made the rounds before he hit Miami as a free agent in 1950. He has made good with 87 of 104 FG attempts for 83.6 percent inside the 39-yard line. Garo's most famous kick was a 37-yard winner at Kansas City in double overtime in 1971. When he picked up a fumbled snap and tried to pass in Super Bowl VII against Washington his feat was commemorated in a song, "Garo's Lament."

Yepremian owns a burger restaurant and a Mediterranean dessert, baklava. Naturally, he and his wife live close to the business in Miami with their son, Garo, Jr.

CHARLIE YOUNG
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES
Born, Feb. 5, 1951, Fresno, Calif.; Lives, Marlton, N.J.; Southern California; TE; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 238.

Like Muhammad Ali, Charlie Young firmly believes in letting the world know how good he is. The tight end of the Philadelphia Eagles came out of Southern California predicting he would be No. 1 among the pros at his position. He was right, too.

In just three seasons with the Eagles, Young has been a pick for the Pro Bowl each time. The brash star led all tight ends in his rookie year with 55 catches. He topped the NFC with 63 in 1974 and last year bagged 49, tying Harold Carmichael for the team lead.

The former college All-American is a strong blocker as well as a hard and fast runner. He was one of the top stars of Southern Cal's national champions.

JACK YOUNGBLOOD
LOS ANGELES RAMS
Born, Jan 26, 1950, Jacksonville, Fla.; Lives, Westminster, Cal.; Florida; DE; Ht. 6-4; Wt. 255.

He's either the top defensive lineman or a razor thin edge away from it in the National Football League. That's Jack Youngblood, the tall, handsome, rugged defensive end of the Los Angeles Rams.

The 6-4, 255-pound stalwart from Florida keeps getting better every year. He's become an automatic pick for the Pro Bowl. He'd rather play in the Super Bowl.

He's big, strong, fast and tough. During the regular season he sacked 14 quarterbacks on a team that had 43 and scored a safety against New Orleans. In the playoff victory over St. Louis, Jack had one of his outstanding days. He sacked the QB once. He forced a fumble, blocked an extra point try, and returned a pass interception 47 yards for a touchdown.

Jack broke in as an understudy to the famed Deacon Jones.

JIM ZORN
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
Born, May 10, 1953, Whittier, Calif.; Lives, Bellevue, Wash.; Calif. Poly-Pomona; QB; Ht. 6-2; Wt. 200.

"He's an outstanding athlete and a great competitor who displays leadership and poise both on and off the field."

That's what Chuck Allen, Seattle's Director of Pro Scouting, said about Jim Zorn after the Seahawks signed the left-handed quarterback for the expansion team's first season.

Zorn, who had been a free agent, immediately set out to prove Allen was right. He played well in the exhibition games. And, no matter what else happens, he will go down in the books as the leader in Seattle's first victory. He completed a 3-yard TD pass to Ron Howard in the final 13 seconds of a 17-16 rallying win over San Diego in the team's fifth exhibition game.

A Little All-American from Cal Poly of Pomona, Zorn was signed as a free agent by Dallas last year. The Cowboys waived him a few seconds before the 1975 season opened to make room for Preston Pearson.

WILL JULIUS ERVING'S DREAM BECOME A NIGHTMARE?

(Continued from page 19)

And this season, his dream became a reality, when after a total of nine years of bitter, costly warfare, the leagues agreed upon consolidation, with the New York Nets, Denver Nuggets, Indiana Pacers and San Antonio Spurs becoming part of the NBA, and the players from the other two ABA franchises—the Kentucky Colonels and Utah Rockies—being spread around in a dispersal draft.

So Erving is not alone, or even among a handful of star players, who have switched leagues between seasons as has happened in the past thus making it easy to rivet attention on them and compare their accomplishments in either the NBA or ABA. Instead, he is joined by a flock of outstanding players, such as David Thompson, Artis Gilmore, Marvin Barnes and Moses Malone, all of whom have established their pro credentials solely in the ABA and are extremely anxious to prove their mettle in the NBA.

However, none is undergoing as much microscopic probing as Erving, the Nets' incomparable forward with the colorful nickname of "Dr. J." After all, he was the ABA's most acclaimed player—the winner or co-winner (he shared it once with McGinnis) of the league's Most Valuable Player Award each of the past three years, the scoring champion in three of the past four seasons, the playoff MVP in two of the past three seasons after leading the Nets to their only two ABA championships, and consistently among the leaders in such categories as rebounding, field goal percentage, assists, blocked shots and steals.

Not only have his statistical accomplishments been extraordinary, but the manner in which he has attained some of them have been mindboggling and eye-popping, reminding onlookers of a Houdini with his great feats of magic. Moving the ball around in his size 11 hands like a magician, he has befuddled opponents and amazed fans with an assortment of shots and moves that often defy description.

Perhaps his most definitive play is the exciting slam dunk. Wilt Chamberlain, who helped make the play famous, had only one style. Erving has at least a half-dozen. He can drive from anywhere on the court, soar through the air with the greatest of ease, wave the ball around and switch it from one hand to the other, then stuff it theatrically through the basket before an audience of enthralled viewers.

Why Willie Shoemaker Picks 'Gordon Jones to Win'

Here's a way to beat the races that 4 out of 5 horse players probably never heard of. A method that—till now—only one out of a thousand would understand well enough to use. Yet it's an approach to handicapping that a few oldtimers say may have made millions for "Pittsburgh Phil" and "The Speed Boys."

But if you think that their secret died with them, you haven't read "Professor" Gordon Jones' book. Willie Shoemaker thinks so much of the "Professor"—and his book—that he allowed his picture to be used on the cover. That's recognition the World Champion Jockey has never given *any* other book on handicapping.

Bobby Frankel, one of the leading trainers, checked out the final manuscript and told us we could quote him. "The best book on handicapping I've ever seen."

Mervyn LeRoy—winner of a special Academy Award, horse owner, President of Hollywood Park—sent Jones a letter of appreciation.

John Luckman and Huey Mahl, publisher and editor of *Systems and Methods*, reviewed Jones' book and wrote: "You can take his 3-year results and find yourself earning over 600% a year on your bankroll. It's all here if you want it, whether you're a novice or a hard-core ticket tearer. We've never tossed this many horseshoes before, but we honestly feel that it can't help but help everyone."

Systems and Methods, in case you didn't know, makes impartial reports to consumers in the field of gambling. They try to "rate" every system or method, from the schlocky to the sublime. They gave Jones' book the highest rating in their entire history. Gordon Jones' book – and *only* Gordon Jones' book – got three horseshoes. *Twice* as high as one that some self-styled genius peddled for $300!

Which makes "Professor" Jones' book—at $14.95—dirt cheap. But hold it—we're not asking you to buy it. Not yet. Instead, we're going to make you the most unusual offer—and guarantee—you've ever read. Why? Because Willie Shoemaker, Bobby Frankel, Mervyn Leroy, and John Luckman and Huey Mahl of *Systems and Methods* weren't paid a penny for their expressions—or stand to profit in *any way*.

But we do. In fact, we—and Gordon Jones—expect to make a bundle. And why *shouldn't* we if we can help you—"whether you're a novice or a hard-core ticket tearer"—become a topnotch handicapper?

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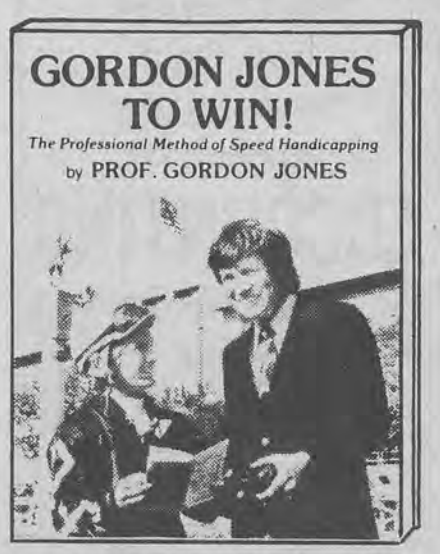
And we'll be around to make good on our guarantee. We—the principals—have been in the publishing business for 20 years; 15 years at the same location. So why not place your next bet on 'Gordon Jones to Win!' We guarantee you can't lose.



Champions: Willie Shoemaker, Gordon Jones

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OOA 6

The "Doctor" was operating at his best in that area in last season's ABA slam-dunk contest during halftime of the All-Star Game extravaganza at McNichols Arena in Denver. Five players were in the competition, and after the other four—Gilmore, Thompson, Larry Kenon and George Gervin—had put on their shows, it was Erving's turn.

Needless to say, Erving won the contest, capping his exhilirating performance with a left-handed, back-handed, reverse slam dunk, a move which he began with a running start three-quarters of the length of the court from the basket.

Thompson, the Nuggets' prize rookie last season, finished second in the contest on a court where he was the local favorite.

The 6-foot-7, 205-pound Dr. J., according to Loughery and several other knowledgeable observers, is the greatest player in the game today pound-for-pound and inch-for-inch—and possibly the greatest in history. Asked to make up the perfect basketball player—a composite of the best assets of several players—Loughery pondered, then said, "You have to start with Bill Russell's defense because he revolutionized defense. And for all the rest, I'll take Doc. That's my composite."

Julius Winfield Erving Jr., now 26, has been honing his basketball skills since before he was 10 years old. His parents were separated when he was three, and he lived with his mother in Hempstead, N.Y., a tough black community on Long Island.

At the age of 10, Erving was so good that a man named Andy Haggerty, who ran a park near where Julius lived, told a friend of his about the youngster. The friend, Don Ryan, coached the Salvation Army Youth Center in Hempstead, and he took Julius onto the team.

Ryan took a deep interest in youngsters, and Erving recalls, "really opened up my eyes. He was very helpful to me in my view of life. I grew up never knowing I was on the other side of the tracks. Then when I started to look around me and see the way other people were living, I said to Don Ryan, 'What do I have to do to get like them?' And he told me, 'You have to perform in school the same as you do on the basketball court.' Unfortunately, a lot of people I played with, excellent ballplayers, just couldn't do it. I did.

"A lot of the guys came from broken homes and Don taught us things we ordinarily would have learned from our fathers, like how to conduct ourselves in a strange environment, things like that. I traveled with the Salvation Army team all over Long Island and I came to see that basketball represented an avenue of getting out and seeing things. The more I saw, the more I wanted to see.

"My family survived because we had determination and a positive outlook," he continued. "A lot of people that I grew up with had the same opportunities that I had, but they didn't have the same attitude. They just thought they'd do nothing like everybody else—they would hang around and that would be it. They didn't realize that your goals will determine what you're going to be. I saw that basketball could be my way out and I worked hard to make sure it was."

When Julius was 13, his mother remarried and the family moved to neighboring Roosevelt, N.Y., another heavily populated black area. He became a starter on the freshman high school team, was promoted to the junior varsity and for the final two games of the season he played with the varsity. In his senior year, he averaged 25 points and 17 rebounds per game, was named the outstanding player in Nassau County and received over 100 scholarship offers.

It was in high school that he also acquired his nickname. "One fellow called himself the Professor and I called myself the Doctor," Erving explained. "Then when I was playing in Virginia (with the Squires of the ABA), Willie Sojourner (one of his teammates) helped me make it into 'Doctor J.'"

Before becoming a living legend, however, and after graduating from Roosevelt High School, he attended the University of Massachusetts for three years. There, he was a member of the school's first undefeated freshman basketball team, then averaged 26 points and 20 rebounds (second in the nation) as a sophomore and 27 points and 19 rebounds as a junior, before dropping out as a hardship case and signing a pro contract with the Squires.

"I liked it there (at Massachusetts)," Erving said. "Coach (Jack) Leaman played a pattern type of game. We would run, but if we didn't have the break we would use our intelligence. It helped me a great deal because it opened my game—it wasn't just a matter of going one-on-one and trying to beat your man. We did a lot of stuff with the ball. The thing is, I didn't handle the ball as much as I do now. I really couldn't do my thing, but I never let it bother me. Once I got into the pros it was like being liberated in the sense that I could handle and dunk. I was held back in school but I felt it was good in a way—I had the opportunity of learning an important part of the game—how to discipline myself in certain situations."

Once Erving became a pro, he was able to do his thing. He had a brilliant rookie season, averaging 27.3 points and 15.7 rebounds during the regular season, 33.3 points during the playoffs and scoring 20 points in the All-Star Game.

"I caught everybody by surprise and that helped me," said Doctor J., alluding to the fact he had not received much publicity in college despite his impressive figures. "No one was sick of reading about how great I was in college and, more importantly, no one knew my moves."

After that 1971-72 season, Erving, who had signed an original four-year, $500,000 contract with the Squires, wanted to renegotiate the agreement. The Squires refused. He signed a 5-year, $1.6 million contract with the dynamic NBA's Atlanta Hawks. But the Squires sued and won Erving back. He played one more year with Virginia, before the financially troubled Squires sold him to the Nets, with whom Erving signed a seven-year contract for $1.9 million, plus numerous bonus arrangements and fringe benefits.

That marriage has been most amiable. Erving has prospered and so have the Nets, if not so much financially as artistically. Surprisingly, the team has drawn better on the road than at home, the sometimes blase New York fans staying away from the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y. for unknown reasons, while the

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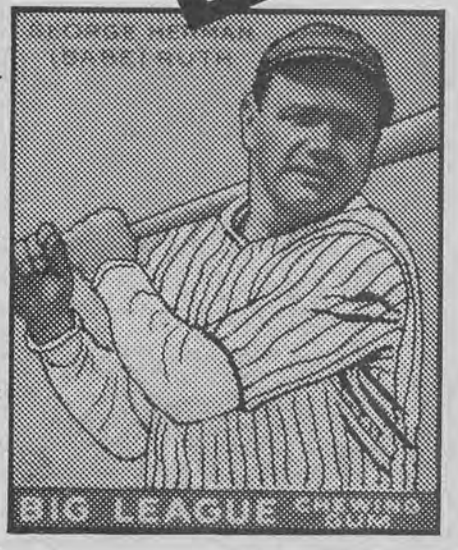

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rest of the ABA fans flocked to see the remarkable Doctor J.

This season, the Nets will flourish even better on the road financially than they have in the past, because as soon as the league schedule was released, NBA fans hurried to purchase tickets for the games when New York and Dr. J would be in their town. A Nets' spokesman went so far as to predict the club would draw about 95 per cent on the road, and also increase its home attendance immeasurably.

Asked how he felt about getting a chance to play against the best in the NBA, he replied without braggadacio, "You're asking the question backwards. That's what Bill Russell said when somebody asked him if he was looking forward to playing against Kareem (Abdul-Jabbar) when he came into the league. The question should be, 'How will they feel about playing against me?

"I'm a professional. I have confidence in myself. I have confidence in my team. We can play against anybody."

That is Erving's verbal style. He always includes mention of his team. He does not go around boasting about his own accomplishments, although, of course, he is fully cognizant of what he has achieved and what he wants to do.

Then, asked, if "kids from nice neighborhoods are ever going to be able to play this game anymore?" he answered succinctly, "You've got to want it so much. I don't know how they're going to do it."

Julius Erving, who did not grow up in a good neighborhood, wanted it badly, and for five years, he was the toast of the ABA, the longest-running star in the league's history. Now, with new horizons to conquer, in the NBA, he will offer four-star performances, the kind that Rick Barry, George McGinnis, Spencer Haywood and Billy Cunningham showed during their travels between leagues.

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CAN THE CANADIENS SAVE HOCKEY?
(Continued from page 15)

the dominant team in hockey during the previous two years.

There is no doubt that seldom has any Cup winner been more popular around the NHL than were the 1976 Canadians. In part, the joy over Montreal's return to hockey supremacy was the continuation of the team's hallowed tradition. For the most part, though, it was due to the distaste many fans felt for the brawling, violent approach to the game employed with brutal success by the Flyers. In winning, the Canadians again proved that style, speed, precise teamwork and close checking were ingredients for victory. In short, most followers of hockey outside the city of Philadelphia viewed Montreal's championship as a triumph of the good guys over the bad.

"I guess a lot of people were happy to see us lose," said forward Dave Schultz, perhaps the meanest of the Flyers' assassins (since traded to Los Angeles). "Let's face it, we haven't exactly been very popular champions."

They've seen plenty of it recently. Last season, for the third time in five years, criminal charges were brought against an NHL player for hoodlum behavior in a game. Dan Maloney of the Detroit Red Wings was accused of assault occasioning bodily harm early in the campaign when he attacked Toronto's Brian Glennie from behind, slugged him, repeatedly slammed him to the ice and put him in a hospital with a concussion. He received a five-minute penalty and an automatic $100 fine.

In January 1975 Henry Boucha, then with the Minnesota North Stars, was slashed on the eye by the stick of Boston's Dave Forbes. The Bruins' forward was charged with aggravated assault, but charges were dropped after the trial ended with a hung jury. Last fall, Boucha underwent the third eye operation necessitated by the injury.

In 1970, Wayne Maki of the St. Louis Blues and Ted Green of Boston were acquitted of assault charges after a fight in which Green had his skull fractured.

Maloney was acquitted of the assault charge against him last June 30 after a Tornoto jury deliberated 9 hours and 25 minutes before reaching a verdict. If he had been convicted, the 25-year-old faced up to five years in prison. But has his close call prompted the aggressive left winger to mend his ways? Let him tell it. "I'm going to continue to play hockey the way I've been taught and the way I think I can play

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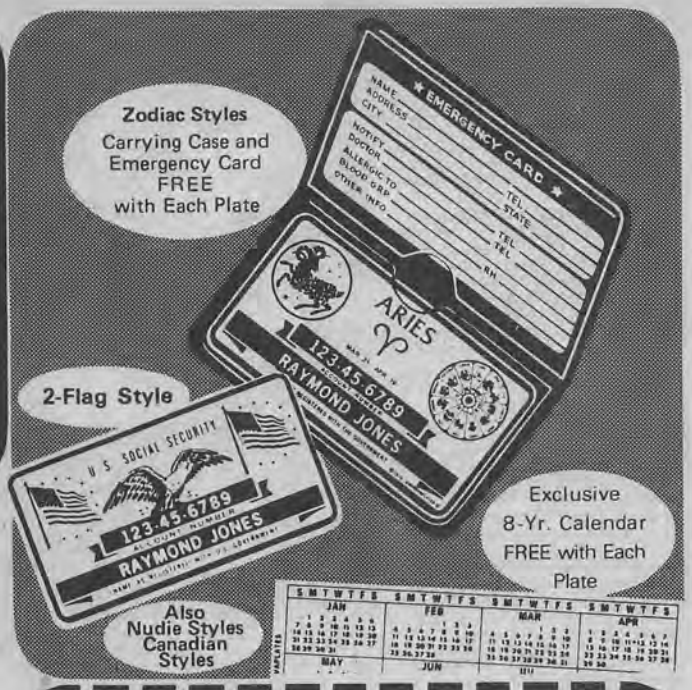

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with the Pittsburgh Penguins, in the dressing room. He returned with a report that Durbano appeared to have a broken nose, cheek and jaw. It turned out that only Durbano's nose was broken, the rest was merely badly bruised.

Later, Durbano recounted, "He only hit me a couple of times, but he hits like hell. He beat me all right. If you have fights, you're gonna lose some."

There were plenty of fights in the NHL last season. There were scores of penalties for fighting, slashing, misconduct, tripping, holding...and whatever. In all, there were 21,051 minutes spent in the penalty box or a total of about 14½ days. The Flyers, of course, were the most penalized team with 1,980 minutes.

And in many instances, it is the youngsters who are paying the penalty for the ills perpetrated on the game by the Philly bullies. William McMurtry, chairman of an Ontario Government inquiry into violence in amateur hockey, blamed professional hockey for the rise of violence at the amateur level. In his report, McMurtry said. "There is nothing wrong with competing. There's nothing wrong with doing your best and trying to win, but there is something wrong with being prepared to do anything in order to win."

McMurtry also linked what he called intimidation tactics by the Flyers to the death of a 16-year-old youth from Mississauga, Ontario who taunted a black player, Paul Smithers, during an amateur game. The youth died in a fight after the game and Smithers was later convicted of manslaughter. "There's no celebration of the game for the sake of the game, or bringing these kids together to make them realize they have a lot more in common rather than the other way around," McMurtry noted. "Instead, they use the Philadelphia syndrome, where at every whistle there is pushing and taunts and cheap shots. That leads to racial taunts, spearing, fighting and a half hour later in the parking lot one boy is dead and one is charged and subsequently convicted of manslaughter."

On the professional level, all of the violence is not restricted to the National League. The World Hockey Association certainly has its share. Last spring, Calgary's tough Rick Jodzio went after Quebec's Marc Tardif, a 71-goal scorer, and the Nordiques' star wound up in a hospital with a severe concussion. The attack came in a brawl during which both benches emptied. Jodzio came off his team's bench, skated 80 feet across the ice and pummelled Tardif, continuing to do so while Marc was semi-conscious. Jodzio and Calgary coach Joe Crozier were suspended by the WHA.

Early last season during a WHA game between Winnipeg and Cincinnati, two Cincinnati players assaulted Veli Ketola of Winnipeg after the Finnish center had scored a goal. Perry Miller of Winnipeg then came to Ketola's aid. During the ensuing scuffle, another Cincinnati player blind-sided Miller in the left eye. Miller missed two games because of cloudy vision.

A few days later when Winnipeg was scheduled to play the Denver Spurs, Bobby Hull, the Jets' star and one of the game's all-time greats, refused to play in protest against the violence that was spreading deeper into hockey's psyche. "That incident against Cincinnati was only the last straw," Hull explained.

He had been burdened by another straw when his 12-year-old son, Blake, was involved in a bench-clearing brawl in a neighborhood game. Blake was later scolded by his father, but the youngster was not very penitent. "I'm the Dave Schultz of my team," Blake said almost proudly.

"Is that the type you want to emulate?" his father asked. "If you want a model don't take Dave Schultz, he's not a hockey player. Take someone like Gil Perreault or Stan Mikita."

The 37-year-old Hull, who led Winnipeg to the WHA title last season, cites what he believes is the primary obligation of the big leaguers to youth. "Setting an example for kids should be hockey's main theme," he adds, bringing out, "Bodychecking and aggressiveness is part of hockey. So is the occasional fight because of the tempo. But not the stuff that's going on. The intimidation. The stick-swinging, flailing it like an ax. The high stick. The spear. That's not hockey."

Since the NHL expanded from six to 12 teams in 1967 and subsequently to 18 clubs and with the formation of the WHA in 1972 intimidation has increased. "But," continues Hull, "if there were the proper people in the front offices and the proper people coaching, this wouldn't be going on. Don't tell me there aren't enough guys

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around who want to play hockey the way it should be played. Some of the new coaches were little guys who got the hell kicked out of them in the minor leagues and now they're getting even by putting together a team of tough guys to kick the hell out of everybody else."

Scotty Bowman, the Canadian's coach, did not put together a team of tough guys to win the Cup in 1976. They won 12 of 13 playoff games, losing only to the New York Islanders in the semifinals before their 4-0 success against Philadelphia. "Montreal skated, skated and skated," recounts the Flyers' Shero, who had three key men playing hurt, Clarke (knee), Orest Kindrachuk (back) and Gary Dornhoefer (charley horse). In addition, sidelined altogether were star goalie Bernie Parent (neck injury) and high-scoring center Rick MacLeish (torn knee ligaments). "But the Canadians would have won anyway, I think," says Shero.

"Montreal is a great club," states Al Arbour, the Islanders' coach. They've got so much talent and depth. They have very few weaknesses. They have the potential to win their divisional (Norris) championship for the next 10 years. I'm not saying they can win the Stanley Cup every time, but they're very deep."

"Last year's Canadians compare with the five-time champion Canadians (1956-60) and the great Detroit team in the early fifties that won 12 straight playoff games," offers Clarence Campbell, who has been the NHL president since 1946. "They have the skating speed of the old-time teams and much more size, especially on defense."

Many experts agreed that the key to Montreal's sweep of the Flyers was its tenacious defense, led by 6-foot-3, 205-pound Larry Robinson. Ken Dryden, the tall, scholarly goalie, was steady in the nets while Steve Shutt, Guy Lafleur, Yvan Cournoyer and Pete Mahovlich paced the swift Canadians' attack.

In regular season, the Canadians posted 58 victories and 127 points, both NHL records. Dryden won the Vezina Trophy with a 2.03 goals-against average and Lafleur was the circuit's leading scorer with 125 points, including 56 goals. However, Jacques Lemaire, another high-scoring Montreal forward, points out, "Everyone thinks of us as an offensive team because we've always scored a lot of goals. But we changed last season. We're now as much of a defensive team as we are an offensive team and we use our defensive hockey to score goals."

Last year the Canadians abandoned their wide open offensive style and Coach Bowman demanded and received a disciplined checking game behind their own blueline. They were still potent when they went to the attack, but the moment they lost possession of the puck they worked extremely hard to make Dryden's job as easy as possible.

The club no longer dazzled the opposition with breakneck, head-manning maneuvers while doing most of their checking at the bank. "The game changed," Bowman explains, "and we did not adjust quickly enough. Sure, our wide-open style carried us well during the regular season the past few years. Once the playoffs began, though, the other teams stopped our attack with good check-

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ing, but unfortunately we couldn't stop their attacks."

So, Bowman teamed his top defensive forwards—Bob Gainey, Doug Jarvis, Jim Roberts, Doug Risebrough—effectively and they earned the kind of acclaim normally reserved for the league's best scorers. They were particularly potent against the Flyers.

Said Philadelphia right winger Dornhoefer about his close-guarding adversaries, "They checked us so closely that you could tell what brand of deodorant they were using." Defenseman Joe Watson moaned, "All those Montreal guys are so big, and so tall, that when they reach out to check with their sticks, it looks as though they can reach all the way across the rink."

Robinson, the big rearguard, perspired quite a bit while enjoying his role as the Canadians' designated hitter. He had some quality company on the backline. "I have never seen a defense so big or mobile as our defense is now," says Jean Believau, a Canadians' executive who played center for the Montreal teams which won the five straight Cups from '56 through '60. "Larry Robinson, Serge Savard and Guy Lapointe are as good as any three defensemen in the league. They are big and fast, and they can shoot and carry the puck well. They are all-around defensemen. When I played we had so many good forward lines that we always seemed to have the puck on offense and scored many goals. Our team now has many goal-scorers but I think it is the defense that has been the big thing." ●

RATING THE N.B.A. CENTERS
(Continued from page 13)

another. Cowens had a big series and even led both teams in assists, despite the fact that Boston Coach Tom Heinsohn changed his style of play.

Dave's enthusiasm enables him to play hurt and not notice the pain. He worked against Buffalo with a painful bone spur. "I've never really tried to analyze the way I play the game, I have just tried to play it my way," he said. "All I can really say about it is that enthusiasm is something I've never had to work at to get."

When big Bob McAdoo of the Buffalo Braves finished with his third consecutive scoring title last spring he joined an exclusive club. Only three men had won as many as three years in a row, George Mikan, Neil Johnston and Wilt Chamberlain. However, Wilt ran off a string of seven. Mikan and Johnston each won three straight.

Being bracketed with Chamberlain to a certain extent meant a lot to McAdoo. "When I was about 14 or 15 years old, Wilt was my idol," he admitted. McAdoo was a rookie in Chamberlain's last season in the NBA and played against him but not head to head. Bob, who is 6-10, was a forward then and was switched to center later on.

Improvement in his play at center can be credited to Bill Russell, now the coach of Seattle, who before an All-Star game worked with Bob for an hour giving him pointers on rebounding and defensive play. Acting on Russell's tips McAdoo has shown improvement in those areas, although he still is primarily rated a gunner.

He is the quickest tall man in the league. He is a marksman and superb from the outside which makes him twice as deadly. "I think I'm the greatest player in the game," Bob said last season. Two years ago he had been bitter in his comments when Abdul-Jabbar was named MVP. But Bob got the honor in 1975 and he quieted down some after that.

His shooting is extraordinary. He makes dazzling plays seemingly off-balance and will shoot from the area on the floor usually reserved for guards. "I used to think McAdoo took bad shots," Abdul-Jabbar commented. "But I've changed my mind. Nobody takes it from where Bob does and hits."

There was a time at Buffalo when nobody seemed to have the ball but McAdoo. Bob has changed some of that. In a five-game stretch last season he had 30 assists, including a career high of nine in one contest. However, his eye is always on the basket. In a game at Phoenix he scored on an in-bounds play in which he actually pushed teammate Tom McMillen out of the way to get the ball.

John Havlicek of Boston says McAdoo is "The best pure shooter I have ever seen." The new coach at Buffalo, Tates Locke,

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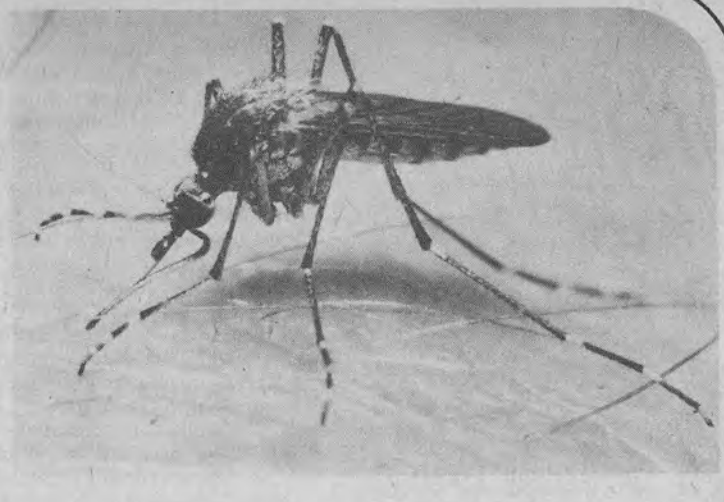

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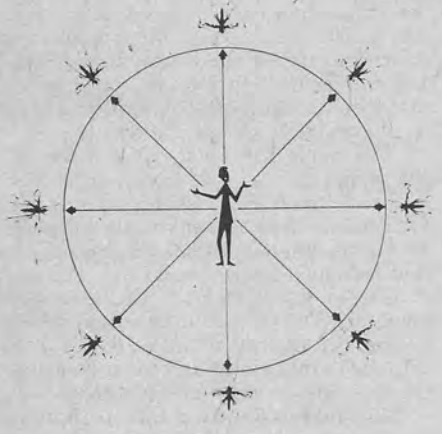

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sums Bob up this way: "McAdoo has three stages of open. A man will watch him getting open, he'll watch him be open, and he'll still be watching him after Mac has been open and has scored. That's how quick he is."

The new big man in the league, Artis Gilmore of the Chicago Bulls, is not that kind of a scorer nor is he that quick. But Artis was a five-time all-star center in the ABA in his five years with the Kentucky Colonels. At 7-2 and 240 pounds he has the physical qualifications. In his first year in the NBA he will have something to prove, that he can play head-to-head against the acknowledge greats of the game.

The Bulls think he can and will. They shelled out $1.1 million to get him in the ABA dispersal draft. He was the first man chosen and along with rookie Scott May, a can't miss youngster, he is expected to put the Bulls back into the ring this season.

In any given game Artis can produce 20 points and 20 rebounds, which is a lot of production. In his final season in the ABA, he averaged 24.6 points a game for the Colonels, which made him the No. 4 scorer in the league. He led in rebounds with 15.51 and was third in blocked shots. He waits for the good shot and was second in two-point field goal percentage with .552. That last statistic is important.

Gilmore's agent had talked in astronomical contract figures when it was obvious Artis would be number one in the draft. But the Bulls, while making some fringe concessions, did not renegotiate his contract which has five season to go at $200,000 a year. Artis will have to struggle along on that kind of money.

Detroit's Bob Lanier, an outstanding player, had physical problems last year and this time he may face a challenge from a center who has enough confidence for a whole team, Leon Douglas of Alabama. Lanier had to fight off a knee ailment plus ankle and shoulder miseries last season. But he still paced the Pistons in scoring with a 21.3 average.

An aggressive young center like Douglas may spur Lanier on. Bob is still in his prime and has great strength and coordination. If Douglas comes on strong enough, Lanier may come on even stronger.

Alvan Adams is a standout for the starting job at center for the Phoenix Suns. The 6-9 youngster was rookie-of-the-year last season in the NBA and was a key man in the surprising surge by the Suns into the championship series. They tripped up the Warriors in a seven-game set after being down three games to two.

Adams is already good and will get better. He led all the centers of the NBA last season in assists with 5.6. What Phoenix wants and very likely will get is better play on defense from Adams. "Defensively, he still has a great deal to learn," said General Manager Jerry Colangelo of the Suns." But that's not surprising. For one thing he often is asked to guard bigger centers who are much heavier. For another, defense in the NBA is the biggest adjustment for anybody to make who is just out of college."

Alvan is smart and has a marvelous attitude, two great assets. "Adams is an excellent outside shooter, a quick jumper with excellent timing and has extraordinary quickness for a guy his size," Colangelo continued. "He has a lot of intelligence and is a complete player on offense."

Adams played his college ball at the University of Oklahoma and passed up his senior year there to turn pro. But he wants to get enough credits for a degree in philsophy and hopes to attain that at Arizona State. He was married shortly before his rookie season to his college sweetheart, Sara Dennstedt, and at the age of 22 is a settled young man.

There is some kind of a chance that if the Suns should luck into a really big center sometime in the future, Adams will be moved to a forward post where his tremendous offensive talent would be put to great use. But at last word Coach John McLeod was in no hurry to make the change.

Wes Unseld of the Washington Bullets is the smallest center in the NBA...physically. But he is one of the strongest and certainly one of the hardest working when he is not bothered by injuries. Wes displayed another talent last year also. He led the league in field goal percentage, beating John Shumate of Buffalo by a whisker so think that your razor would probably glide right by it.

Wes made 318 field goals of the 567 attempted for a percentage of .56085. Shumate hit on 332 of 592 for a percentage of .56081. In typical fashion, Unseld praised his teammates after learning that he had become a league-leader.

Unseld was No. 3 in the league in rebounds. The 6-7½ center went up for an average of 13.3 rebounds to finish third behind Abdul-Jabbar and the industrious Cowens, who averaged 16 per game.

Milwaukee's towering Elmore Smith is not the scorer that some of the other top centers are but he did a good job last year, stepping into the large shoes left behind by Abdul-Jabbar. Elmore was second in blocked shots, his specialty, averaging 3.05 a game, and he was eighth in the league in rebounds with an average of 11.4.

Smith is not likely to be a candidate for the MVP Award at any time but he is polishing his professional skills a little more with each season and manages to pay his way.

Tom Burleson, the Seattle Skyscraper, is a special project for Bill Russell who is trying to impart his own great skills of the past to the big center. Tom was seventh in the circuit in blocked shots last year and had some games when he was a force to reckon with. The great hope in this case is that Russell will gradually change Burleson into a dominating figure, taking full advantage of his height and weight.

That's something like what the front office of the Portland Trail Blazers dreams about for their big man, Bill Walton, the one-time UCLA kingpin. Bill, a Nature Boy, has been caught in everything but an avalanche since joining Portland as the Number One draft choice in 1974.

In two seasons Walton has endured knee surgery, a sprained finger, a bone spur on his ankle, a strep throat, a sprained ankle, a broken toe, a bruised cheek, cut eye, and ankle sprain. A couple of those things were the result of a car accident. Misfortune has been a relentless shadow for the 6-11 center. As a result his NBA statistics have been ordinary.

Being of a philosophical turn of mind, Bill had been trying to roll with the punches. "You can't let the frustrations get you down," he said. "If I didn't like playing basketball so much, I probably wouldn't have this attitude. But what I want to do right now is play basketball."

At one time last year, Walton had a fractured left wrist which was heavily taped, and then he dislocated the middle and ring fingers on his right hand. With both hands disabled he had trouble eating, bathing, dressing, and doing most of the things that the rest of us take for granted every day.

When the season was over, Bill sighed: "You keep hoping every injury will be the last one." ●

O.J. SIMPSON'S CRUCIAL DECISION

(Continued from page 17)

Simpson wanted—and also insisted—on a trade to a West Coast team. He said he'd had enough of Buffalo because the long separation from his wife, Maugerite, threatened to break up their marriage.

Owner Wilson agreed to try to make a trade for O.J. with the Los Angeles Rams. But he is a tough dealer and so is Caroll Rosenbloom, the keeper of the Rams. O.J. said he would play only one more year, if traded, but hinted to intimates that he might make it three.

Rosenbloom acted shocked when Wilson asked for Jack Younglood, the Rams' fine young defensive end, and Lawrence McCutcheon, an ace running back, as well as a promising young tackle, Mike Fanning, and first round draft choices in 1978 and 1979.

Everybody knew O.J. would play more than one year if he went to the Rams but Rosenbloom kept insisting he couldn't give up all that talent for a one-year man. Wilson insisted just as strongly that he wouldn't accept anything less for the man he considered the greatest talent in football. Things reached an impasse.

O.J. went up to Montreal to help ABC televise the Olympic Games. Whenever he was interviewed he insisted he wanted to go to Los Angeles. His talk appeared designed to force Wilson into a corner. The Rams held tight and so did the Bills. O.J. waited for someone to crack. But nobody did.

The teams went to training camp with O.J. working out at Southern California. They started playing the preseason schedule. O.J. continued to watch and wait, not quietly. The deadline came and passed for interconference trades. Now any deal with the Rams was dead. If O.J. was to be traded it had to be to some club in the AFC which has only Oakland and San Diego on the West Coast. In the meantime, the Bills had put O.J. on the "Did Not Report" list. He could easily be reactivated at his own request to Commissioner Pete Rozelle if he signed a contract.

Wilson called Simpson to make one last bid to get him back to Buffalo. He was

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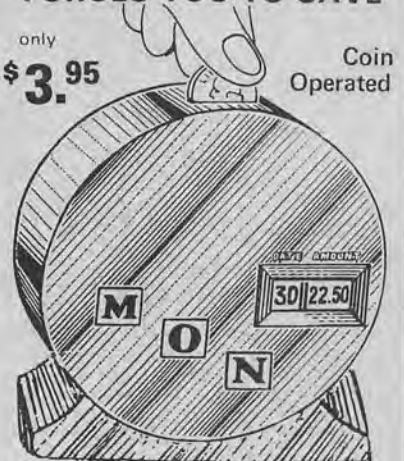

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rebuffed but told O.J. he was flying to California anyhow. They met, with O.J.'s wife present, for several hours the day before the season started. They met again Sunday morning, Sept. 12th. Finally they reached an agreement.

Simpson agreed to join the Bills and signed three separate one-year contracts for a reported total of $2.5 million.

"If I ever leave Buffalo I'll retire," said O.J." I won't play for any other team... It was a difficult decision to make and Marguerite pushed me, knowing that I wanted to play football. Mr. Wilson showed a genuine concern about my departure from football. He assured me he made every effort to make a trade but, failing that, the important thing was for me to stay in the game.

"Considering all our conversations, looking over what Mr. Wilson had in mind and what we wanted to secure for the future of the family, Marguerite and I decided it would be best for us if I went back to football. I never wanted to leave the game and I felt bad about not being able to play with the fellows."

Simpson flew from Los Angeles to Buffalo in time for a brief Sunday night workout before the Bills Monday night opener with Miami. Some 500 fans came out to the airport to meet him.

They hoped 65,000 would show up for the attractive curtain raiser with the Dolphins in the vast stadium which usually is jammed to capacity with some 77,000. Season ticket sales had been down and the advance for the opener was below par. Once word of O.J.'s return sped around town, they turned out 77,683 strong for that first game.

O.J. was used sparingly, entering the game on the fourth offensive play to a mixture of boos and cheers. Although the TV announcers tried to represent the boos as people really calling "Juice, Juice," it was obvious that Simpson's prolonged contract battle and the disparaging remarks he had made about Buffalo had produced a stormy re-entry.

The old O.J. flashed once during that first game. A short pass from Joe Ferguson moved Simpson beyond the line of scrimmage. He set loose his best setting, past the big defensive linemen and one-on-one with the linebackers and defensive backs. He danced one way, spun past a defender, cut to the outside, shook off another cornerback and finally was dragged down after a 44-yard gain.

It was a sure thing that O.J. soon would turn the boos to cheers as he set out once again in pursuit of all the NFL rushing records that the great Jim Brown established years ago.

Going into the 1976 season this is the way the alltime rushing list read:

	Seasons	Yards	Attempts
Jim Brown	9	12,312	2,359
Jim Perry	10	8,597	1,941
Joe Perry	14	8,378	1,737
O.J. Simpson	7	8,123	1,707

When Brown retired after the 1965 season to take up a movie career, as O.J. had planned, they said his records never would be challenged. His total of 58 100-yard games was believed beyond reach. Nobody else had close to his four 200-yard games.

It could be that O.J. had given some thought to Brown and his movie career when he decided to listen to Ralph Wilson's sweet words. Brown was an overnight sensation when he made "The Dirty Dozen" and he was a hot property for a few years on the Hollywood scene. But he has not been cutting such a wide swath lately as new names have appeared on the scene.

O.J. already had a deal with General Motors when he came out of college as the Heisman winner. He was hooked into a profitable deal with an orange juice company. He had a small featured role in a movie and was making guest star appearances on TV series.

As everybody with a TV set knows, O.J. is a regular with the ABC Sports team during the offseason. Any time you flick on the set you will see him dashing through an airport to pick up a rental car with a charming smile. He played a feature role in "Towering Inferno" and has made other appearances. It was the hope that he might land the coveted lead role in the dramatization of the book, "Ragtime" that first started him thinking seriously of retirement.

But, barring accident, retirement is for the distant future. He now can concentrate on the job of trying to win a championship for Buffalo while advancing himself in the record books.

All three running backs ahead of him on the alltime list already are in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. They must have a plaque in production for the day when O.J. arrives in Canton to claim it.

A mere 255 yards behind Perry, O.J. went into the season needing but 474 to catch Jim Taylor a recent Hall of Fame inductee. Way off in the distance is the shadow of Brown, 4,189 yards ahead.

O.J. broke the alltime single season record in 1973 with his fabulous 2,003-yard year, during which he also set a single game record of 250 yards against the New England Patriots. In 1972 he ran for 1,251 yards, in 1974 it was 1,125 and in 1975 it was 1,817.

If he can match the total of his last three seasons in the next three years, he will surpass Jim Brown and become the greatest runner in the history of the sport. It won't be easy but it is not impossible. O.J. is only 29 and is in his eighth year as a pro. The Juice already has 32-100-yard days and has tied Brown's total of four 200-yard days.

The loss of Jim Braxton who was injured in the 1976 opener and forced to undergo knee surgery was a body blow at Simpson's hope for another super season. In addition to carrying his share of the work load as a runner. Braxton was a superior blocker who delighted in clearing the way for O.J.

It will be difficult for O.J. to surpass his sensational 23-yard touchdown season of 1976 when he set a league record, breaking Gale Sayers' old mark. However, he has been used more and more as a pass receiver with Joe Ferguson and Gary Marangi frequently looking his way for a target so he doesn't have to charge into that line time and time again.

Is O.J. really as good as Jim Brown? We'll get a chance to make a valid comparison. Brown played nine seasons before he quit. With seven years behind

him, O.J. says he may play two or three more years although he has signed three one-year contracts.

Brown probably was the more powerful runner. He dragged people with him but he had a deceptive burst of speed once he powered past the line of scrimmage. O.J. is a different type with his eye-opening cuts and quick strides that enable him to slide out of a tackler's grasp.

When O.J. broke away for an 88-yard run against the Steelers last fall, Coach Chuck Noll said, "No other back in pro football could have made that run."

Ask Ray Nitsche, the great Green Bay linebacker of the 1960s and he'll tell you, "Jimmy Brown was the best runner ever."

You pay your money and you take your choice. O.J. or J.B.? It's nice to have you back around the league, O.J. even if you do put the Million Dollar Man to shame with your $2.5 million. ●

THE SECRET THAT MADE MARK FIDRYCH AN INSTANT SUPERSTAR
(Continued from page 26)

the same season players were traded for millions and others were playing out their options for more millions, helped make Fidrych a national hero.

"Money doesn't mean all that much to me," said the young pitcher. "I just like to have a good time and enjoy what I'm doing whether it's fixing cars or winning games."

The Detroit Tigers, who accidently fell into this gold mine of a pitcher, promised Fidrych would be well taken care of in 1977. They could hardly take care of him as well as he had taken care of them.

After June 28, when Fidrych became a national hero while beating the Yankees on ABC television's Monday night game of the week, the Tigers averaged close to 40,000 fans every time Fidrych stepped out on the mound. Fidrych's pitching performances would be responsible for more than a quarter of the total attendance of the Tigers.

"He is without a doubt," said a Tiger spokesman, "the greatest drawing card this town has ever seen."

Detroit is no Johnny-Come-Lately to the American League with a history dating back to the original expansion starting in 1901 with such magnificent players as Hank Greenberg, Mickey Cochrane, Hal Newhouser and the recently retired Al Kaline among its legendary heroes.

Fidrych's appeal comes not so much from his marvelous pitching as from his personality and antics.

"I have never seen a player who can be as loose as he is off the field," said veteran Rusty Staub, "and concentrate as hard as he does on the field."

That is Fidrych's appeal and that is the reason for his success. He can be loose, funny, gregarious before and after the game. He can smooth the mound on his hands and knees before an inning, he can wave to the fans, he can congratulate a teammate

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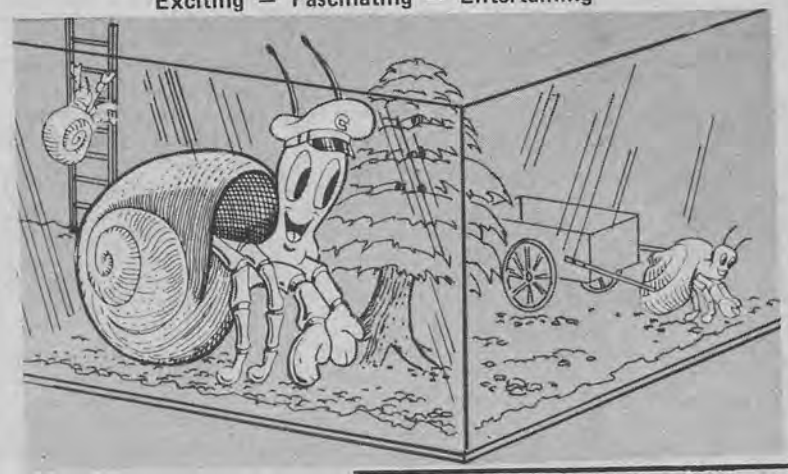

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or chat with an umpire. But when he throws that baseball he is a professional at work.

"He has excellent stuff and he keeps everything down," says manager Ralph Houk. "That seems easy but not a lot of them can do it."

Unlike a lot of young pitchers Fidrych has excellent control. He can not only keep the ball low and away from hitters, he can come in and out with pinpoint accuracy.

"He makes catching an easy and comfortable position," says Bruce Kimm, the young rookie Tiger catcher who became Fidrych's private receiver in midseason.

If there really is such a thing in sports and show business as an overnight sensation, Mark Fidrych has to be it. A week before his June 28 start against the Yankees in Detroit hardly anybody outside of his friends, his family and a few fanatic fans in Tiger Stadium knew of him. A year before that it was limited to friends and family. They knew him only as garage mechanic who talked to cars.

Fidrych was born in Worcester, Mass. on August 14, 1954. He was not terribly interested in athletics as a kid and made few ripples in his home town. He was more of a basketball and football player than a baseball player.

In his last year in high school, as he grew to his full height of 6-3 and 175 pounds, a lot of scouts began hanging around watching the skinny kid pitch. Even then he kept the ball down, the secret of pitching in Little League, big league or any league.

"I never really thought much about it," said Fidrych. "It was just part of my natural motion. I was never really a big strikeout pitcher and by keeping the ball down I had a better chance to win."

Fidrych was an automobile mechanic with little hopes of a professional career in June of 1974.

"I was working in this gas station fixing cars," he said. "When things didn't go right I would talk to the engines, you know, just urge them to start when they wouldn't, something like that."

Then came the phone call that changed his life. The Detroit Tigers had drafted Fidrych in the tenth round of the 1974 free agent draft. Some two hundred and forty free agents were deemed better Major League prospects than Fidrych.

"When I heard that," said Fidrych, "I just put down my tools and walked out of that garage."

Fidrych was certain he didn't want to talk to car engines any more. He was not certain yet that he did want to talk to baseballs in the big leagues.

"I would go play baseball but if I didn't like it I was prepared to do something else," he said. "What else? I don't know. Maybe talk to girls."

Fidrych reported to the Tigers A farm club in Bristol, Conn. He got into twenty three games, mostly as a relief pitcher, won three, lost none, had an ERA of 2.38, with forty strikeouts in thirty four innings and was marked down in the Tiger winter books as a serious prospect.

In 1975 Fidrych was sent to Lakeland, was 5-9, moved up to Montgomery where he was 2-0 and finished the year at the Tigers' triple A club at Evansville where he was 4-1 with a 1.59 as a starting pitcher.

"When we started spring training in 1976," says Ralph Houk, "we had good reports on the boy. We knew we needed pitching and I was going to give him a good long look."

The owners of the twenty four Major League clubs locked the gates of spring training camps for two weeks as the price paid for participation in their union. It meant that young players—especially non-roster players like Fidrych invited for a look—had to show something quickly.

"Fidrych showed enough in camp to earn the trip north," said Houk.

"When Fidrych was told on the next to last day of spring training that he would be going north with the Tigers he celebrated the way any young red blooded American would celebrate such an event. He climbed the fence late at night at the Tigers training park in Lakeland, Florida, with his girl friend and danced under the stars with her on the pitcher's mound.

"I didn't need music," he said. "I made my own music."

The season began and Fidrych was targeted as the fourth starter in Ralph Houk's pitching rotation. As often happens in April and early May with Major League teams, only three pitchers were starting as open dates and rainouts took up the spots reserved for young pitchers without experience.

On April 20, in Oakland, Fidrych got the last out of the sixth inning in the lost game before a pinch hitter was used. Then he pitched a scoreless inning fifteen days later at home against Minnesota. Nobody noticed.

"I wanted to get him in there as soon as I could," said Houk. "I knew he had a good arm. I thought he could be a winner."

On May 15, at home in Tiger Stadium, Fidrych got his first Major League start against the Indians. He won 2-1. The fans were excited about their rookie pitcher. He also did something else but few noticed.

In tough spots, especially against a good hitter with men on base, Fidrych would bring the baseball to his face, stare at the seams and hold a discourse.

"I always talked to the ball when I was a kid," he said. "Nobody really ever noticed before. It was nothing new. Getting noticed. That was new."

He also did other things. He would start the game on his hands and knees, smoothing the dirt in front of the pitching rubber with his hands, moving it back and forth to his liking, building little mounds of sand in front of the rubber.

"I just like to have a comfortable spot for my feet to land," he said.

He was shut out in his next start and then proceeded to win six in a row. On June 28 he was to face the Yankees, the first place Yankees, on national television with a 7-1 record. He was already the talk of Tigertown. Soon he would be the talk of the nation.

Fidrych has a long nose and a sharp face. He appears to resemble a character on the children's television program, Sesame Street called Big Bird. He is a giant yellow chicken who walks and talks to children.

"I don't even know how the name came about," said Fidrych. "Everybody just started calling me Bird as in Big Bird."

"Take one look at his face," said Rusty Staub, called Rusty since he was a child because of his rust-colored hair. "If you

look at him you'll see why the guys call him Bird."

With a colorful nickname, with a 7-1 rookie record, with the antics of clearing the mound and talking to the ball, Fidrych proceeded to humble the proud Yankees before 47,855 screaming fans at Tiger Stadium and more than fifteen million on television.

Big Bird Fidrych was on his way.

After the Yankee start he shut out Baltimore 3-0 and lost to Kansas City 1-0. On July 13 he was to start the All-Star game for the American League in Philadelphia against Randy Jones of the San Diego Padres, the biggest winner in baseball at that point in the year with a 16-4 mark.

"Yeah, this is fun," said Fidrych, as he addressed the assembled baseball press in the banquet room of the Bellevue-Stratford hotel, soon to be in the news again as a result of Legionaire's Disease. "I don't think I'll be scared."

Fidrych didn't really have his good stuff and the NL got a couple of quick runs off him but it didn't faze the Bird.

"This game is for fun and that's what I'm doing here," he said. "I came here to have a good time."

After addressing the press, Fidrych was brought over to meet another celebrity of the event, the President of the United States. President Ford looked at him.

"You're the Bird, right," he said.

"Yeah, and you're the President. By the way didn't you send me a telegram."

The President confessed that he had indeed sent Fidrych a congratulatory telegram after one of his victories.

"I called first," said the President.

Fidrych was unreachable in his room even for the President of the United States.

Fidrych continued to win and continued to draw fans as the Tigers were an attraction only on days the Bird was on the mound.

"The great thing about this kid," said veteran Staub, "is that none of this seems to bother him. Some other kinds of guys would blow their minds with all this attention. He knows how to handle it."

As the season rolled on and Fidrych became more and more of an attraction, letters, invitations to speak, presents, awards began to pile up. He was getting more mail alone than the rest of the Tigers together.

"We always have to have the pitching rotation advertised well in advance," said veteran Tiger spokesman, Hal Middlesworth. "Everybody wants to know when he's coming to town."

On the Tigers last western swing, Fidrych pitched in Oakland and was not scheduled to pitch in Anaheim against the Angels. When the fans in that southern California city heard about that they were terribly disappointed. They wanted to see the Bird.

"One day Fidrych called us," said a California spokesman, "and asked if he could sign autographs."

In an almost unheard of display of sensitivity and caring for the fans, Bird Fidrych was put inside a bird cage against the stands and signed autographs for more than a thousand fans for fifteen minutes before the game.

"I owed it to them," he said.

Fidrych's rapid rise has been warm and

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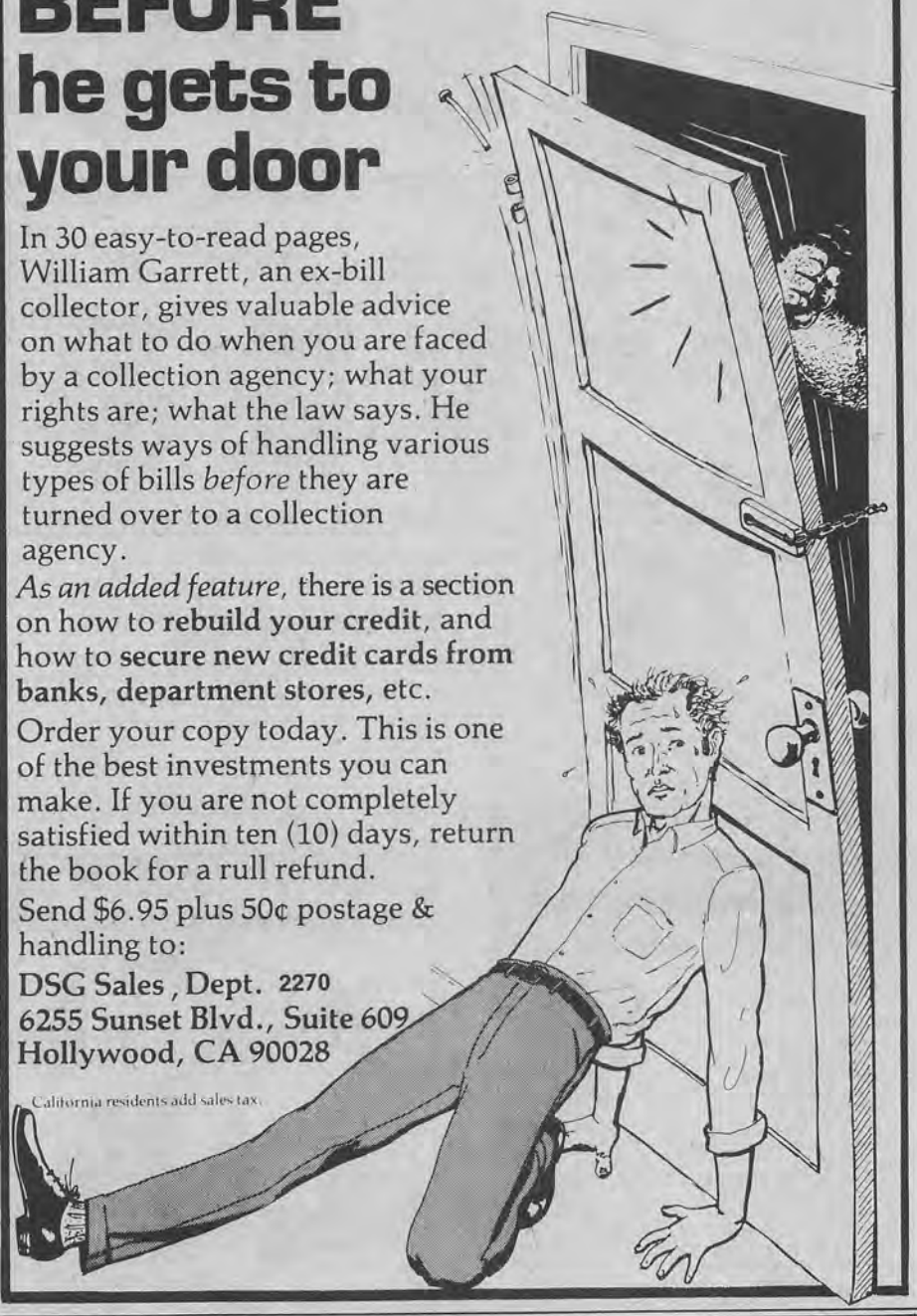

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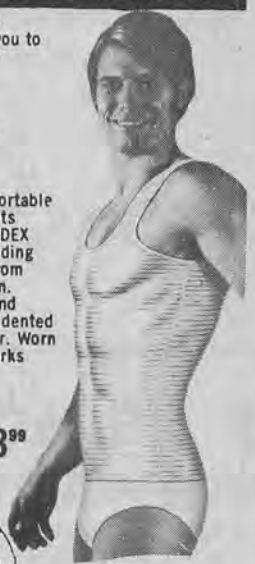

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"As a pitcher," says Ralph Houk, "he is just a baby. There is no telling how good he will be. He is just learning. He still hasn't even matured completely yet physically. His stuff will get better, his fastball will imporve. There's no way of knowing how good he will be."

Off the field several books on The Bird are being planned. None of them, supposedly, will come with talking records. He has several television spots lined up for the winter, guest appearances on many of the major comedy shows, autograph sessions in some of the better stores and a possible part in a movie about his life or another handsome hero's.

Then, of course, there is a contract to be signed for 1977. Fidrych is represented by the William Morris Agency which handles only the biggest show business names. He does not have an agent for his baseball contract.

"I think I'll handle that myself," he said. "I'm sure they'll give me a fair figure."

Fidrych's $16,500 figure for $976, the Major League minimum, was good enough for an untried pitcher in 1976.

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THE BIG CHANGE IN TERRY BRADSHAW

(Continued from page 23)

brightest guy in the world. "It bothers him, of course," he said. "He's only human. But he knows that if he stands his ground and proves himself, people will be on his side."

Terry's father talked about his son as a youngster. "We all thought baseball would be his sport," he said. "What an arm he had. When he was five he could throw a baseball 40 feet at a target six inches in diameter. It was an old bucket, I buried in the ground. It had the bottom side sticking up and he learned control throwing at it.

"When he was 11 he pitched three perfect games and relieved in another. Then he switched to football. He'd hang a five gallon bucket on a swing set and he'd be out there every afternoon, all by himself, throwing footballs at it. In the course of one summer he wore out two footballs and four buckets."

Terry eventually became a star high school quarterback and an even brighter star at Louisiana Tech where he attracted national interest and wound up as Pittsburgh's No. 1 draft pick in 1970.

Terry has been called "L'il Abner" because of his husky frame, 6-3 and 215 pounds, blond hair and strong jaw. He

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does pretty well when it comes to selecting a Daisy Mae also. His first wife was Miss Teen Age America of 1969. That marriage ended in a divorce. Last June Terry called the marital signal for himself a second time.

In a ceremony in Beverly Hills, Calif., he married a pretty blonde named Jo Jo Starbuck, a former national figure skating champion. Both Terry and Jo Jo are intensely religious and that's one of the things that brought them together.

More and more in recent years Bradshaw has gone to audibles at the line of scrimmage after seeing the enemy defensive formation. "Check at the line", he'll tell his teammates and then call out a new set of signals as his team sets for the play. When the Steelers defeated Cincinnati, 30-24, early in November last year in a key Central Division game, Terry's play-calling was superb.

After the game a sportswriter complimented Terry on his game and especially one call that resulted in a big touchdown toss to Swann. "That was a hell of a smart performance," the writer said.

Bradshaw beamed. "It was?" he said. "Golly, not many reporters have said anything as nice as that to me before."

Terry's overall statistics last year showed a 57.7 percentage of completions on total gain of 2,055 yards. His 18 touchdown passes compared favorably with his nine intercepted tosses. With George Blanda retiring from the Oakland scene Terry now is the No. 6 passer among the active quarterbacks in the AFC.

Going into this season he had 754 completions for 9,579 yards and 66 touchdowns. It must be remembered, however, that for several years he was in and out of the starting lineup with Joe Gilliam and Hanratty also getting in there.

Terry's stature has grown around the league. After the Steelers wore down Houston, 24-17, last Nov. 9 in a game which saw Joe Greene and L.C. Greenwood both leave with injuries, Houston Coach Bum Phillips talked about it. "The difference was Terry Bradshaw," he said. "A couple of years ago he couldn't have done it. He has become a poised quarterback."

Phillips was referring to Terry's play in the last two minutes. Houston had just tied it at 17-17 and the Steelers put the ball in play on their 22 yard line. In five plays which ate a minute and a half of playing time, Terry took Pittsburgh for a score.

The winning play was a 21-yard touchdown strike to John Stallworth, Terry's third TD pass of the game. It was also the second on which he located a secondary receiver after his primary man had been blanketed by defenders. Phillips' praise was relayed to Bradshaw in the Steeler dressing room.

"Coach Phillips chews tobacco and wears cowboy boots," Bradshaw grinned. "He's my kind of guy."

That crack Steeler offensive line also is made up Terry's kind of guys. They really set up a hard-shelled pocket around him when he drops back to throw. Tackles Jon Kolb and Godron Gravelle, guards Gerry Mullins and Jim Clack, center Ray Mansfield and two hard-working reserves, San Davis and Mike Webster really fire out. In the past couple of years they have grown increasingly protective of Bradshaw, whose courage and stamina they admire.

Terry also has excellent receivers, Swann, who had eleven touchdown grabs in 1975, John Stallworth and Frank Lewis, two vastly underrated receivers.

Swann was the MVP of the Super Bowl game for his fantastic catches, including one on the sidelines when he defied the law of gravity to stay in bounds and another when he was bouncing against the turf. He is only in his third year and seems destined to team up with Terry as one of the most feared passing combinations in the NFL.

Coach Noll has been perhaps the closest observer of Terry's evolution from an erratic young quarterback into a seasoned star. "Everything Bradshaw does now, he does with total confidence," Noll said at the start of training camp this summer. "He gets better with every day, every game, every season."

Terry talked about it himself. "I always believed in myself," he said, "but I needed others to believe in me as much as I did. But I had to earn it. And it wasn't until the last couple of years and our Super Bowl championships that I did. Now I know what I have to do and my teammates know I can do it."

Bradshaw will pull the ball down and run with it when he has to, although Noll and his aides on the sidelines hold their breaths. Terry is strong and can take punishment. But one of the problems is

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that he runs like a fullback. He likes to run and he goes hard. When Bradshaw under a full head of steam is met head-on by a tough defender, the crash sometimes leaves Terry wobbly.

Terry has let his weight get out of hand a couple of times in the past. Three years ago he was up to 225 which reduced his mobility. He is happiest at 210 but can play at 215.

Weight is only incidental in his burgeoning career as a country and western singer, which started when he needled Tillman Franks, a manager of other singers.

"I just was pulling his leg, telling him I could sing also, but he took me up on it," Terry said. "He invited me to his home to sing for him. I didn't show up for three weeks. I was petrified."

Franks liked what he heard when Terry did sing and he booked Bradshaw for a four-hour recording session in Nashville, the capital of country-western melody. Afterward Terry said it was tougher than any afternoon he has spent in the National Football League.

"I've never been so scared in my life," he said. "I was sweating so bad I had to take my shirt off. I sang two songs, 'Making Plans' and 'I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry'. I didn't like the first one and wasn't too happy with the second. But they did and they're the pros."

The early success of his initial recording got Terry a one-night engagement at the Palomino Club in North Hollywood, Calif., a month after the Super Bowl game. The Palomino is considered one of the top country-western music spots in the country.

"People say we're just trying to cash in on the Super Bowl," Bradshaw said. "It probably looks that way but I've been singing most every day of my life. I'm going to be judged harder than most. A lot of people don't want you to succeed at two things. But I love entertaining. Nobody's going to buy my record if it's not good."

Terry admits that his football success played a big part in his getting a chance to record songs. But he also says that if he makes it big in show business, the Steelers may be looking for a new quarterback a lot sooner than they expect. "I know a lot of other guys have tried this," he said. "But I think I may be the first guy from sports to go into entertainment and make it on merit."

If that sounds like an ego trip Terry immediately tries to erase that impression. He says he doesn't like to be thought of as a star. "I'm real bashful," he said. "People start looking at me and I get real uncomfortable and start sweating. I don't like people to make a fuss. I'm just plain old me and I'm trying to keep it that way. I've never had any friends tell me I've gotten too big for my pants."

The ultimate decision on Terry as a singer will come from the music-loving public, but he did impress a tough teammate, veteran Steeler center Ray Mansfield.

"About 20 of us went to a tavern during a night off from training camp." Manfield said. "We wanted to hear Terry's record. We weren't expecting much and kidded him about it. But he shut us up. The guy can sing. He doesn't have one of those thin little voices. He really can belt out a song." ●

THE SPORT WORLD SCENE

(Continued from page 6)

py, it blows his mind; it's too vague.

"I always end up crying with my father. Always, I feel so much for him. I just wish I could hold him and hug him and say to him, 'Dad, stick with me.' But I can't."

***

A tale of two cities. Star Royal third baseman George Brett and fiesty Yankee manager Billy Martin are carrying on a king-sized feud. It revolves around the conditions under which George's pitcher brother, Ken, was traded from the Yankees to the Chicago White Sox in return for Carlos May.

Says George, "My brother told me that the Yankees told him the Royals didn't want him but that's not what the Royals told me. Either he (Martin) is lying about it or my brother's lying, and my brother doesn't lie."

For his part, Martin answers, "I like his brother. We traded him because we needed a left-handed hitter, Ken Brett is a good pitcher who couldn't break into our lineup. That's all there was to it."

Not one to carry on one donnybrook when he can be the focal point of two, Martin is also in a rhubarb with ex-Yankee hurler Larry Gura, now a member of the Royal staff.

Gura is likely to remember Martin's playoff comment well into the coming diamond season. Said Martin, "I traded him from the Rangers because he didn't have a curve. I traded him from the Yankees because he couldn't make the team. If I had him now, I'd trade him again and I'd think up a reason later."

***

Sign language. The Los Angeles Rams have gone to wigwagging plays from the sidelines to take some of the pressure off of quarterback Jim Harris. Coach Chuck Knox reports he can make his decisions known by having an assistant go through the motions. He limits the wig-wag to what he calls a semaphore system. "With two arms, two legs and 10 fingers, there's almost no limit to the signs you can make," Knox says.

Defensive signals have been used from the sidelines by the Rams for the past four seasons. Defensive coordinator Ray Malavas isn't too concerned about his signals being picked off by the opposition. He notes, "It's possible to steal any sign. But in football, I think stealing would be counter-productive. When players think about things like that it confuses them and reduces their concentration." ●

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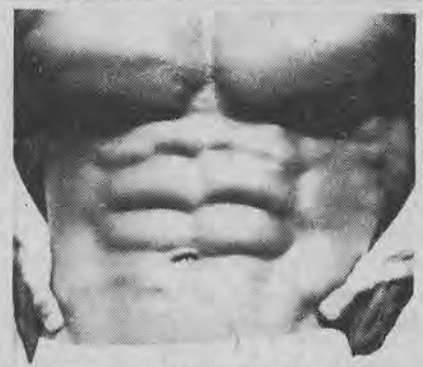

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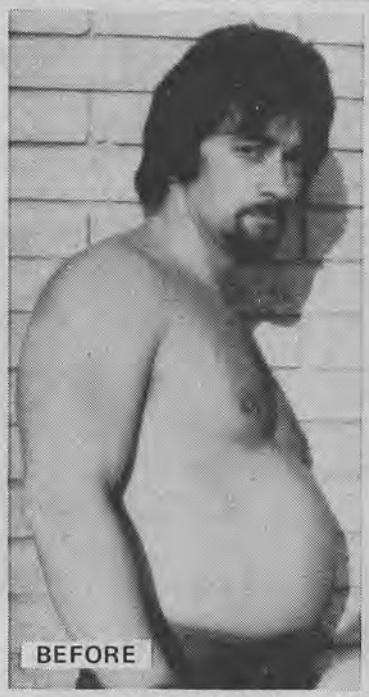

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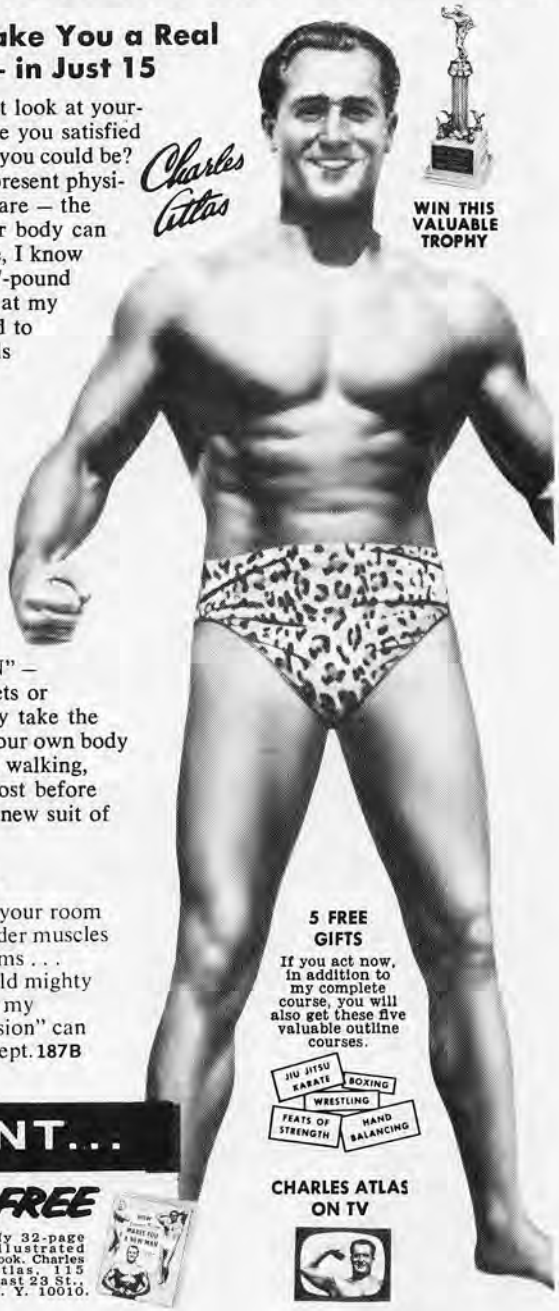

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